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CORONA HARVEST

COMMUNIST POLICY TOWARDS SOUTHEAST ASIA, 1954-1969

A CHRONOLOGICAL COMPENDIUM

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Prepared by

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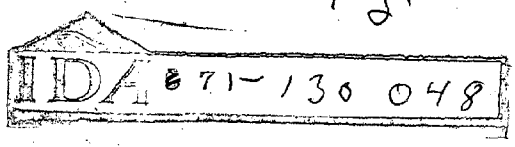
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FOREWORD

This document has been designed to complement another Project CORONA HARVEST publication, U.S. Policy Towards Southeast Asia, 1943-1968, A Chronological Compendium, prepared by Dr. Robert Futrell, USAF Historical Division, 1 October 1968. In the Foreword to Dr. Futrell's work it states that an understanding of the chronological development of United States policies and objectives is important to any study or evaluation of the events in Southeast Asia in recent years. Equally important to such studies is an understanding of the development of Communist policies and objectives in this area of the world. This document has been produced as an aid toward achievement of that understanding.

Communist Policy Towards Southeast Asia, 1954-1969, A Chronological Compendium, is one of a number of reference documents on the environment of the conflict in Vietnam and adjacent areas prepared in support of research and analysis performed in connection with Project CORONA HARVEST--an evaluation by the United States Air Force of the effectiveness of air-power in Southeast Asia. It is a historical reference guide containing a compilation of statements, views, and opinions regarding the war in Vietnam and closely related issues as made by leaders primarily from the USSR, the Chinese People's Republic, and the various Communist parties in Southeast Asia. Pertinent comments from other Communist leaders throughout the world are also included. The entries are listed chronologically and each entry includes a full citation to its source. This allows the document to be used as a guide to reference material as well as a source of information. Brief commentary by the author is included within the entries, or as footnotes, for the purpose of integrating and clarifying the material, but not for drawing conclusions. Additionally, it is not intended that this document alone should serve the needs of highly specialized studies that require more definitive information.

The entries included in this compendium are taken from unclassified sources, including periodicals, books, and reports from the Communist nations involved as well as the Western Press. Translation, where necessary, has been done by the author and this is so noted in the citations. In evaluating the statements included in this compendium, the reader should be aware that Communist policy statements taken from open literature invariably contain propaganda and may not necessarily reflect true governmental intent or policy. This fact should be given due consideration in drawing conclusions.

This volume is published by the CORONA HARVEST Project Office, Aerospace Studies Institute, Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. It has been organized into chapters which correspond to the time divisions selected for the CORONA HARVEST study, thus providing ease of reference. No evaluation or editorial comment is included, with each chronological entry taken directly from the indicated source.

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Lieutenant Colonel R. E. Clapper served as coordinator of this work, accomplished under the supervision of Colonel J. J. Rosenow. Donald E. Schulz, a political scientist of the Socio-Technical Information Research Division, Battelle Memorial Institute, is the author. Dr. I. J. Klette served as the Institute's advisor for the project. Mr. Schulz acknowledges the able assistance rendered by Mrs. Celia M. Denofre, information analyst, in compiling the material and indexing the report.

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CHAPTER I

1954-1960

1954

January-- President Ho Chi Minh sends New Year's greetings in the form of a poem to the North Vietnamese people. In his message, he outlines the major tasks to be accomplished during the year. First on the agenda is the ending of the Indochinese War through the final, crushing defeat of the enemy. Second comes village reform and an increase of productivity. *("Congratulations With the New Year, 1954", translated by Donald E. Schulz*, in Ho Chi Minh, Selected Articles and Speeches (Moscow: State Publishing House, Political Literature, 1959), p. 483.)*

25 January-18 February-- At the Berlin Conference, attended by the foreign ministers of the United States (Dulles), France (Bidault), Great Britain (Eden) and the Soviet Union (Molotov), the Soviet representative calls for a "Big Five" conference - to include Communist China - to meet solely on the problems of Asia. This suggestion is unacceptable to the United States which, according to Eden, refuses "to admit the right of Communist China to be one of the great powers dealing with world problems." Subsequently, a compromise communique is issued on 18 February stating that the Indochina and Korea issues will be discussed at a conference to begin at Geneva on 26 April, to which representatives of the United States, France, Great Britain, the USSR, the Chinese People's Republic and other interested states will be invited. *(Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs, Mission to Hanoi (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1968), p. 214; US Department of State, American Foreign Policy, 1950-1955 (Washington: GPO, 1957), pp. 2372-73.)*

March-- With the approach of the Geneva negotiations, both French and Vietminh forces prepare for a major encounter at Dien Bien Phu. Having succeeded in getting French General Henri Navarre to scatter his mobile reserve into the four corners of Indochina in pursuit of a "single-battle" conclusive victory, General Vo Nguyen Giap masses his troops around the beleagured fortress. In an "Order of Encouragement" to his men, he notes that in the "three months since the enemy parachuted his forces on Dien Bien Phu, our troops have encircled and pinned them down there, thus creating conditions

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*Hereafter, translations done by Donald E. Schulz, the principal investigator on this study, will be designated by "trans. DES".

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for us to defeat him unremittingly on all fronts throughout the country...The Dien Bien Phu fortified entrenched camp has become completely isolated, standing all alone in the midst of our immense rear." Thus, Giap concludes, the time has come for the Vietminh regular forces to launch their offensive. Not only will a victory at Dien Bien Phu mean the destruction of the bulk of the enemy effectives, the liberation of the whole North-West and the consolidation of the Vietminh rear, but it will have a "resounding influence throughout the country and abroad" where pressures are mounting on the French government, in light of its continuous failures, to peacefully resolve the conflict through negotiations. *(Vo Nguyen Giap, "Order of Encouragement to All Officers and Men, All Units, All Arms, to Start a Great Offensive Upon the Dien Bien Phu Fortified Entrenched Camp", in Dien Bien Phu (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1964), pp. 204-05.)*

8 March-- Pravda, the official newspaper of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, states in an editorial that "the importance of the Geneva Conference is determined by the broad possibilities it opens for easing the present international tension, for solving the painful Asian and Far Eastern problems." After noting the failures of French military policy in Indochina and the pressures of French public opinion to end the war, the Soviets chide that government for maneuvering to postpone and even sabotage the upcoming Conference. Of particular concern are statements by M. Georges Bidault to the effect that since France does not recognize the Ho Chi Minh regime, there is no obligation to invite it to Geneva. With regard to the French position, Pravda states that "the conditions they are advancing beforehand are unacceptable and disregard the real state of affairs." Warning that an increase in US military aid to France will not enable the colonialists to negotiate from a "position of strength", the Soviets note that only through an agreement respecting the principles of freedom and national independence can peace be attained. *(P. Orestov, "French Public Demands Restoration of Peace in Indochina", trans. DES, Pravda, 8 March 1954, p. 4.)*

11 March-- Increasingly concerned about the possibility of the United States replacing France as the dominant colonial power in Indochina, Hoang Minh Giam, Foreign Minister of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, denounces the "US government's decision to send fliers to take part in the aggressive Indochina war." This action, taken at the very moment that preparations are being made for the Geneva Conference, is said to signify an intensification

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of American intervention. Quoting a speech by Ho Chi Minh, delivered on 26 November of the preceding year, the Foreign Minister states the "basic points" of DRV policy towards the Indochina problem: "If the French colonizers continue their predatory war, then the Vietnam people are determined to carry the patriotic war to victory. If the French government, having learned the lesson of several years of war, wishes to proclaim a truce and settle the Indochina question by negotiation, the government and people of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam are ready to discuss a French proposal." *("Statement by Foreign Minister of Democratic Republic of Vietnam", trans. DES, Pravda, 11 March 1954, p. 6.)*

13 March-- On the battlefield, Giap's troops continue to keep the pressure on the French. In an "Order of Encouragement", he calls for an intensification of fighting by units on all fronts. Guiding principles are to be: "Actively to keep the initiative, To launch small combats with certain successes, To fight unremittingly, To coordinate with all fronts throughout the country." *(Vo Nguyen Giap, "Order of Encouragement to All Officers and Men on Various Fronts Throughout the Country to Coordinate the Action With the Dien Bien Phu Campaign", in Dien Bien Phu (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1964), pp. 210-11.)*

20 March-- In a message to his troops, General Giap reviews the victories of past months and their impact on French public opinion. He notes that all of the major French newspapers have frontpaged the news of the Dien Bien Phu battle. Should that fortress fall, he suggests, the enemy would be in a disadvantageous position at the Geneva Conference. Although great victories have been won on the battlefield, the French are still strong. Thus, they must not be underestimated or defeat will await the Vietminh. The principle to be followed is that of "striking surely, advancing cautiously and fighting unremittingly." The immediate central task is to "build positions of attack and encirclement" and thus isolate Dien Bien Phu from French support troops. Pressure is to be kept at a high level with a view towards wearing out the enemy. *(Vo Nguyen Giap, "Message Calling on the Troops to Build Offensive and Encirclement Positions on the Dien Bien Phu Front", in Dien Bien Phu (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1964), pp. 214-19.)*

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29 March-- General Giap informs his troops that the High Command has decided to launch a big attack on Dien Bien Phu. He notes, however, that this is not to be the general assault but rather a large preliminary operation designed to "soften up" the enemy and weaken his morale. Specific aims are "... to wipe out as many enemy effectives as possible in several successive engagements...to destroy and occupy part of the artillery positions of the enemy to deprive him of this support, then use it to shell him...to occupy such places as advantageous to us, hold and use them eventually to threaten the remaining enemies most efficiently." This decision has been made primarily because now "we have absolute superiority in effectives as well as in fire power" and "fairly solid positions of attack and encirclement." By following the principle to "strike surely and advance cautiously", the enemy may be defeated in this encounter and further weakened for the coming general assault. *(Vo Nguyen Giap, "Letter to Officers and Men Before the Wave of Attack on the East Sector of the Dien Bien Phu Fortified Entrenched Camp", in Dien Bien Phu (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1964), pp. 223-27.)*

5 April-- Testifying before the House Foreign Affairs Committee US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles states that he has just received new information concerning Chinese activities in Vietnam. The following facts, he claims, are verified concerning the battle of Dien Bien Phu: "First, a Chinese Communist general named Ly Chen-Hou is stationed at Dien Bien Phu at the headquarters of General Giap, the Viet Minh commander. Under this Chinese Communist general...there are nearly a score of Chinese Communist technical advisers to the headquarters of General Giap. Also there are numerous other Chinese Communist technical military advisers at the division level. There is a widespread system of special telephone lines installed, and these were installed and are maintained and operated by Chinese personnel. There are a considerable number of 37 millimeter antiaircraft guns, radio-controlled, in the Dien Bien Phu area which are shooting through the clouds to bring down the French aircraft. These guns are operated by members of the Chinese military establishment. In support of the battle there are approximately 1,000 trucks, about one-half of which have arrived since the first of March, all coming from the Red China area, and all driven by Chinese Army personnel. The foregoing is additional to the fact, of course, that the artillery, the ammunition, and the equipment generally come from Communist China." Dulles observes that the Chinese Communists claim that the war in Vietnam is an internal affair, as is the general war in Indochina. But he says that Ho Chi Minh forces have invaded Laos and Cambodia. *(83d Cong 2d Sess,*

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The Mutual Security Act of 1954, Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives (Washington: GPO, 1954), pp. 9, 15, 18, 20.)

9 April-- Pravda quotes an editorial from Nhan Dan, organ of the Vietnam Working People's Party, thanking the Soviet Union for its aid in convening the upcoming Geneva Conference. Special emphasis is put on the great power status of China: "This agreement shows that the settlement of urgent international problems, especially in the Far East, cannot be achieved without the participation of the Chinese People's Republic." Although criticism is offered of the military terms for an armistice in Indochina proposed by French Premier Laniel, the main target of Communist invective is the United States, the "chief instigators for the expansion of the...war..., who very recently sent a new group of American fliers to Indochina and plan to send a military mission to Vietnam to take over the running of the war." These "provocational actions", Nhan Dan states, are "fraught with serious consequences for the security of all peoples..." *(A. Kozhin, "In the Vietnam Press: Peoples of Indochina Support Establishment of Lasting Peace", trans. DES, Pravda, 9 April 1954, p. 4.)*

22 April-- By mid-April, the French position at Dien Bien Phu has become, in the words of French Chief of Staff General Paul Ely, "virtually hopeless". On the battlefield, General Giap tightens his trap. He notes that "our positions of encirclement have reached the enemy's central sector. This sector is now within the range of all our pieces of artillery." Pressure is to be increased until the foe collapses from exhaustion. *(Vo Nguyen Giap, "Letter Calling on the Dien Bien Phu Fighters to Push Ahead the Emulation Drive to Snipe the Enemy", in Dien Bien Phu (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1964), p. 228.)*

8 May-- With the fall of Dien Bien Phu, President Ho Chi Minh issues a letter of congratulations to the Vietnamese people. He states that this "victory is big, but it is only the beginning. We must not be self-complacent and subjective and underestimate the enemy. We are determined to fight for independence, national unity, democracy, and peace. A struggle, whether military or diplomatic, must be long and hard before complete victory can be achieved." *("Congratulatory Letter to Armymen, War Service Workers, Shock Youth, and People in the Northwest Area Who Have Won Brilliant Victory at Dien Bien Phu", trans. DES, in Ho Chi Minh, Selected Articles and Speeches (Moscow: State Publishing House, Political Literature, 1959), p. 484.)*

11 May-- Vo Nguyen Giap informs the sick and wounded at Dien Bien Phu that the fortress has been destroyed and the entire Northwest liberated: "By wiping out the enemy at Dien Bien Phu, we have backed in a realistic and efficient way, the peasants' struggle

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for land and the diplomatic struggle of our Government delegation at the Geneva Conference." While the imperialists have now been forced to the conference table, vigilance must be maintained to make sure they do not sabotage the negotiations. *(Vo Nguyen Giap, "Letter to the Wounded and the Sick on the Dien Bien Phu Battlefront", Dien Bien Phu (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1964), pp. 231-32.)*

13 May-- In an "Order of the Day", General Giap notes that the Dien Bien Phu victory constitutes a "leap forward" from "small-scale positional warfare...to large-scale positional warfare..." and provides a base for more victories in the future. *(Vo Nguyen Giap, "Order of the Day on the Occasion of the Dien Bien Phu Victory", in Dien Bien Phu (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1964), p. 243.)*

14 May-- In an article in the labor union newspaper Trud, the Soviets respond to a suggestion by US Undersecretary of State, Walter Bedell Smith that the Indochina problem could be solved through an agreement between the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Bao Dai Government. The Soviets reject any claim that Bao Dai is a legitimate participant and reiterate their support for the DRV as the representative of the "multimillioned Vietnam people". They suggest that Bedell Smith, the chief US negotiator at Geneva, is following his government's policy of replacing the French presence in Indochina with an American presence. Such a strategy, it is noted, cannot turn back the wheel of history. *(D. Monin, "The Sort of 'Agreement' Bedell Smith Is Trying to Achieve", trans. DES, Trud, 14 May 1954, p. 3.)*

15 May-- Pham Van Dong, DRV delegate to the Geneva Conference, states that Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos are "geographically a unified entity and are corelated [sic] with each other in all respects...Since the French colonizers occupied and ruled over Indochina, the peoples of the three states have continuously and coordinately developed their national liberation movements against their common enemy..." He notes that the National United Fronts of these states had clearly announced on 11 March 1951 that the people would continue to struggle against the invader and, "on the basis of voluntariness, equality, mutual assistance, and mutual respect for each other's sovereignty,...fight for the peace, independence, unity and democracy of the three nations..." *(A. M. Halpern and H. B. Fredman, Communist Strategy in Laos (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, RM-2561, 14 June 1960), p. 2.)*

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29 May-- Thailand brings the situation in Indochina to the attention of the UN Security Council, stating that Viet Minh forces remaining in Laos and Cambodia with the intention of overthrowing the legal governments of those states are a threat to international peace. Thailand requests the aid of the UN Peace Observation Commission in the matter, but the resolution is vetoed by the Soviet Union. *(90th Cong 1st Sess, Submission of the Vietnam Conflict to the United Nations, Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate...on S. Con. Res. 44...S. Res. 180 (Washington: GPO, 1967), p. 193.)*

11 June-- The Soviets support Pham Van Dong's demand that a simultaneous cease-fire be put into effect throughout Indochina, rather than in Vietnam alone, as desired by the French. *("Resolutions of Committee of National United Front of Vietnam and Bureau of Vietnam Peace Committee", trans. DES, Pravda, 11 June 1954, p. 3.)*

ca. late June-- The Chinese People's Republic, supported by the Soviet Union, issues a resolution calling for "Asian nations to consult together with the aim of undertaking, through mutual obligations, efforts directed at preserving Asian peace and security." At a press conference in the Indian capital of New Delhi, Chou En-lai again mentions that it would be desirable for "the responsible leaders of the chief Asian countries to meet and consult from time to time." *("In Interests of Peace in Asia and Throughout the World", trans. DES, Pravda, 1 July 1954, p. 1.)*

13 July-- Questioned by Pierre Mendes-France about the prospects for peace in Indochina, Chou En-lai replies that on his recent Asian tour he "found an equal desire for peace among all the people I talked to." He adds: "Each side would need to step toward the other...Which is not to say that each has an equal number of steps to make..." *(Jean Lacouture, Ho Chi Minh (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 193.)*

13 July-- Ho Chi Minh, in a secret appeal at the sixth meeting of the Central Committee of the Lao Dong Party, seeks to convince his comrades of the desirability of a peaceful settlement of the Indochina conflict. He states that in the "new combination of circumstances, the former watchword 'resistance to the end' must be replaced by 'peace, national unity, independence, democracy...' When people embark on negotiations, they have to make reasonable mutual concessions. In the past we used to talk of driving out the French expeditionary force and annihilating it; now the French have agreed to withdraw their army at a given date...Hitherto, the French Union did

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not exist in our eyes. Today we are prepared to discuss the question of joining the French Union, freely and on an equal footing..." Explaining the temporary partitioning of Vietnam, Ho notes that to "demarcate those areas within which forces are to be regrouped is not the same thing as to divide the nation: this is a provisional measure aimed at the successful reunification of the country...Our compatriots dwelling in hitherto free regions which will now be temporarily occupied by the enemy will have grounds for discontent; some will take a black view, they will despair and possibly allow themselves to be exploited by our adversaries. We must make them realize clearly that, in the interest of the whole country, in its lasting interest, they must be capable of enduring the present. Doing so will bring them honor. The nation will be grateful to them." He goes on to warn against the evils of leftist and rightest deviationism, suggesting that the former (excessive and uncompromising militancy) will leave the Vietminh isolated, "cut off from our own people and from the people of the world..." and the later will take the "form of negative pessimism and unprincipled concessions." *(The Selected Works of Ho Chi Minh (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962), pp. 458-62.)*

20 July-- Three agreements are concluded at Geneva for the cessation of hostilities in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The agreement affecting Vietnam is signed by the representative of the People's Army of Vietnam and the representative of the CINC French Union Forces in Indochina. It provides for a provisional military demarcation line at the 17th Parallel and a demilitarized zone on either side of the line, bans the introduction of fresh troops, military personnel, arms and munitions, or building of military bases in Vietnam, provides that an International Commission for Control composed of representatives of Canada, India, and Poland shall supervise the agreement. When dealing with questions concerning violations, or threats of violations, which might lead to a resumption of hostilities, the decisions of the International Commission must be unanimous. The agreement on Laos provides for the movement of Viet Minh and French forces out of the country and the concentration of Pathet Lao forces in the provinces of Phongsaly and Sam Neua pending a political settlement. An International Commission will also supervise this agreement. The agreement in regard to Vietnam allows replacement of worn-out military equipment on a piece-by-piece basis but prohibits reinforcements "in the forms of all types of arms, munitions, and other war material, such as combat aircraft, naval craft, pieces of ordnance, jet engines and jet weapons, and armoured vehicles." The

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agreement in regard to Laos prohibits "any reinforcements of troops or military personnel from outside Laotian territory" but permits the French High Command to leave specified numbers of French military personnel required for the training of the Laotian National Army in the territory of Laos. *(Peter V. Curl, ed., Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1954 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1955), pp. 283-310.)*

21 July-- The Final Declaration of the Geneva Conference is issued. This document, which remained unsigned but was endorsed by a voice vote of the countries present (with the exceptions of the United States and the French-controlled Bao Dai Government), supports the cease-fire arrangements. It reiterates the temporary military character of the demarcation line at the 17th Parallel and declares that democratic freedoms and institutions should be created as a result of free general elections by secret ballot to be held in July 1956. This vote will be supervised by an international commission composed of representatives of the members of the International Supervisory Commission. *(Marvin E. Gettleman, ed., Vietnam, History, Documents, and Opinions on a Major World Crisis (New York: Fawcett Publications, 1965), pp. 151-54.)*

21 July-- Neither the United States nor the State of Vietnam (the Bao Dai Government) sign the Geneva Agreements. The Government of Vietnam, for its part, objects that its proposals to obtain an armistice without division of Vietnam, through the disarmament of all belligerent forces and the institution of provisional control by the United Nations over the entire territory pending the reestablishment of peace and free elections has not been considered at the Conference. Its delegation also protests the hasty conclusion of the armistice contracted only by the high authority of France and the Viet Minh, the fact that the armistice abandons territories to the Viet Minh which are still in possession of Vietnamese troops, and the fact that the French High Command has arrogated to itself without preliminary agreement with the delegation of the State of Vietnam the right to fix the date of future elections notwithstanding that a matter of a clearly political character is concerned. Moreover, the US representative at the Conference, Walter B. Smith, declares that his government is not prepared to join in the declaration by the Conference as submitted. He states that the United States "will refrain from the threat or the use of force to disturb" the agreements and that it will "view any renewal of

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the aggression in violation of the aforesaid agreements with grave concern and as seriously threatening international peace and security." In connection with the declaration concerning free elections in Vietnam, the United States declares: "In the case of nations now divided against their will, we shall continue to seek to achieve unity through free elections supervised by the United Nations to insure that they are conducted fairly." With respect to the protest made by representatives of the State of Vietnam, Secretary Smith says: "...the United States reiterates its traditional position that peoples are entitled to determine their own future and that it will not join in an arrangement which would hinder this. Nothing in its declaration just made is intended to or does indicate any departure from this traditional position." *(Peter V. Curl, ed., Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1954 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1955), pp. 315-17.)*

22 July-- Upon completion of the Geneva Conference, Ho Chi Minh addresses his countrymen. He states that the "regroupment in two regions is a temporary measure; it is a transitional step for the implementation of the armistice and restoration of peace, and paves the way for national reunification through general elections. Regroupment in regions is in no way a partition of our country, neither is it an administrative division." He goes on to say that during the armistice the Vietminh army is to be regrouped in the North and the French troops are to be regrouped in the South. Thus, a number of regions currently occupied by the liberation forces will be temporarily reoccupied by the French and vice versa. This is a necessity: "North, Central, and South Viet-Nam are territories of ours. Our country will certainly be unified, our entire people will surely be liberated...We are resolved to abide by the agreements entered into with the French Government. At the same time, we demand that the French Government correctly implement the agreements they have signed with us... We must endeavor to struggle for the holding of free general elections throughout the country to reunify our territory." *("Appeal to the Nation After the Successful Conclusion of the Geneva Agreements", trans. DES, in Ho Chi Minh, Selected Articles and Speeches (Moscow: State Publishing House, Political Literature, 1959), pp. 489-92.)*

23 July-- The Soviets issue an official statement on the Geneva Agreements in which they note that the decisions prohibiting establishment of foreign military bases in

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Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia are "of greatest importance" as is also the commitment by these states not to enter military alliances. It says that the decision to hold free elections in Vietnam in July 1956 "creates conditions for the national unification of Vietnam in conformity with the national interests and aspirations of the entire Vietnamese people. This decision, adopted as a result of persistent efforts by the democratic states, signifies the defeat of those aggressive forces which were striving for the dismemberment of Vietnam in order to make Southern Vietnam a springboard of the proposed new aggressive bloc in Southeast Asia." *(Allan B. Cole, ed., Conflict in Indo-China & International Repercussions, A Documentary History, 1945-1955 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1956), p. 191, citing Official Soviet Statement in Pravda and Izvestia, 23 July 1954.)*

5 August-- In an article published in the Soviet Government organ Izvestia, Moscow accuses the United States of trying to nullify the decisions of the Geneva Conference by incorporating Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam into an "aggressive bloc called SEATO...", designed to combat the national liberation movement in Asia. The Soviets insist that the "general elections in Laos and Cambodia must settle these states internal problems." The fate of the states of Indochina cannot be "predetermined" by the creation of military alignments like SEATO. *(V. Kudryavtsev, "USA Steps Up Its Intrigues in Southeast Asia", trans. DES, Izvestia, 5 August 1954, p.3.)*

31 August-- Izvestia denounces US efforts to continue military aid to Southeast Asia, "including the $800,000,000 earmarked for Indochina." It condemns all attempts to "scrape together an aggressive bloc [SEATO]..., contrary to the agreements reached at Geneva," and to incite Vietnamese nationals residing in the Hanoi and Haiphong areas to evacuate to the South. *(B. Vronsky, "On International Themes: Enemies of Peace in Asia Are Hard At It", trans. DES, Izvestia, 31 August 1954, p. 4.)*

2 September-- Ho Chi Minh, on the anniversary of the revolution that brought him to power in 1945, states that the DRV is "resolved to respect and implement the Armistice Agreement entered into with France. We shall protect French economic and cultural interests in Vietnam. We are ready to resume negotiations with the French Government and to re-establish good relations with France on the basis of equality and mutual benefit." He trusts that the French Government will faithfully respect and implement the Armistice Agreement and promises "to preserve and strengthen peace" as the surest means of achieving national reunification, independence,

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and democracy. Furthermore, he urges that our "people from North to South must fight for the organization of free general elections to reunify the whole country." *("Appeal on the Occasion of the Celebration of the Ninth Anniversary of the August Revolution and National Independence Day", trans. DES, in Ho Chi Minh, Selected Articles and Speeches (Moscow: State Publishing House, Political Literature, 1959), pp. 496-501.)*

27 November-- Izvestia complains that "certain people" are creating artificial obstacles to the fulfillment of the Geneva Accords. In particular, Moscow denounces the extensive propaganda campaign conducted by the US for the purpose of attracting refugees to the South. French reprisals against former resistance fighters are condemned, and it is suggested that the actions of the French Government are inspired by US pressure. Specifically, the Soviets charge that the United States is trying to sabotage the scheduled 1956 elections and, in order to have grounds for intervening in Indochina, is spreading "provocational rumors that the Democratic Republic of Vietnam is sharply increasing the strength of its forces, equipping them...with tanks, trucks and heavy armaments received, 'obviously, from the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia via China.'" Moscow denounces such charges as "slanderous fabrications" which have been rightfully rejected by the International Supervisory and Control Commission. *(V. Kudryavtsev, "Subversive Activities of USA in Indochina", Izvestia, 27 November 1954, p. 4.)*

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1 January-- President Ho Chi Minh in his New Year Message reports on the work that will have to be done in order to "consolidate peace, realize unification, and achieve independence and democracy throughout the country." He reiterates the DRV's determination to "correctly implement the armistice agreements." At the same time, he urges the other side to do the same, "to respect the people's democratic liberties, to put an end to the terrorist acts against the population in southern Vietnam, and stop inducing or compelling a number of our compatriots in the north to evacuate to the south." He goes on to say that "Northern and southern Vietnam, which are members of the same family...certainly cannot be split. We must enhance the close connections between the south and the north. We must be broadly and tightly (united?) from the north to the south; support our compatriots in the south in their struggle for democratic liberties in conformity with the Geneva

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agreement. We must render easy and convenient the economic and cultural relations and the communications between our compatriots in the north and those in the south. We must carry out these works in order to attain the holding of free general elections and realize national reunification." *(Foreign Broadcasts Information Service, "Ho Chi Minh Cites Tasks For New Year", Indochina: Vietminh, 3 January 1955, pp. ccc 5-6.)*

2-3 January-- Pham Van Dong states that the DRV sincerely wishes, for both political and economic reasons, to establish economic relations with France. Such contacts, however, must be on the basis of equality and reciprocity and in no way prevent the DRV from establishing relations with other friendly countries like China. As to French Southeast Asian policy, he is of the opinion that "France must choose between Washington and Hanoi, and only the latter policy will enable her to maintain political and economic positions in the Pacific." Should the US-supported government in the South refuse to participate in the nationwide elections called for in the Geneva Accords, that "would be a very grave decision, but it is...[the French] who are responsible, for it is with ...[them] that we signed the Geneva agreement, and it is... [they] who will have to see that it is respected. The unity of Viet Nam will be achieved in any case, with France or against France..." *(Ellen J. Hammer, The Struggle for Indochina Continues (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1955), p. 22.)*

20 March-- Vietminh leaders continue to emphasize the need for national reunification. The Observer quotes Phan An on the economic situation: "Rice. First and foremost there must be enough rice...This country must be unified. They need each other economically, the north and the south. There can be no question of continued partition." *(Ellen J. Hammer, The Struggle for Indochina Continues (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1955), p. 22.)*

18 April-- Ho Chi Minh writes a eulogy for Pravda to commemorate Lenin's birth. In it he lauds Leninism as the guiding light for Asian revolutionaries and suggests that the Communist states in China, Mongolia, Korea and Vietnam are the forefathers of other "young forces" rising to struggle for national liberation. After praising China and the Soviet Union (especially the latter, whose diplomatic activities are described as having been "a deciding factor" in bringing the Indochina conflict to an end), Ho maintains that the Lao Dong Party "has no other interests than those of our people and our Fatherland..." He charges that the "other side" has violated the Geneva Agreement 2,114 times, including 467 times in South Vietnam, resulting in 806 dead,

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3,501 wounded and 12,741 arrested groundlessly. The United States and their henchmen are "nurturing the dark scheme of permanently dividing our country, placing South Vietnam under their sway, checking all democratic forces, and sabotaging the 1956 general elections." In these circumstances, he emphasizes that the struggle, at least for the present, has shifted from the battlefield to a political struggle for reunification: "Peace, reunification, national independence, and democracy are problems which are closely linked together. If there is no consolidation of peace, there is no possibility of reunifying Vietnam through general elections. Inversely if there is no national reunification by means of general elections, there is no possibility of establishing a firm basis for peace." *("Leninism and the Liberation of Oppressed Peoples", trans. DES, in Ho Chi Minh, Selected Articles and Speeches (Moscow: State Publishing House, Political Literature, 1959), pp. 556-62.)*

ca. 23 April-- At the Bandung Conference of nonaligned Afro-Asian states, Chou En-lai dwells at some length on China's desire to live in peace with its Asian neighbors. He assures Thailand that he is "absolutely certain" that his country would not attack it and expresses an eagerness to negotiate an agreement with Bangkok settling the question of the dual nationality of the 3,000,000 Chinese residing in that land. Similar assurances are given to Cambodia, Laos, the Philippines and Japan. At the same time, Chou denies charges of Communist aggression through infiltration and subversion. He also warns nations against joining regional groupings against China. Such acts, he says, would cause his country to seek the support of like-minded nations and thus increase tensions. *(New York Times, 24 April 1955, p. 2.)*

ca. 24 April-- The DRV signs a pact with the Indochinese Kingdom of Laos during the Afro-Asian conference in Bandung. Although details are not disclosed, Laotian officials reveal that it is based on the five principles of co-existence sponsored by India and China: mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, nonaggression, noninterference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful co-existence. *(New York Times, 25 April 1955, p. 5.)*

17 May-- At a tea party organized by the High Command of the Vietnam People's Army, General Giap remarks that on the previous day the last units of the Vietnam People's Army left South Vietnam to regroup in the North. Simultaneously, the take-over of newly liberated regions and towns, including the Haiphong perimeter, was completed. *(Marvin Gettleman, ed., Vietnam, History, Documents, and Opinions on a Major World Crisis (New York: Fawcett Publications, 1965), pp. 151-54.)*

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20 May-- North Vietnam agrees to extend for a month the time during which refugees may move from the North to the non-Communist South. About 50,000 refugees are believed to be still in the Haiphong area seeking Vietminh authority to leave. Estimates of the number already evacuated to the South vary from 700,000 to 820,000. *(New York Times, 21 May 1955, p. 5.)*

6 June-September-- The September issue of the Soviet journal International Affairs comments on DRV efforts to convene a consultative conference in preparation for the forthcoming elections to reunify the country. It notes that the DRV "declared on June 6 its readiness to start preliminary negotiations and on July 19 sent a Note to the South Viet-Nam Prime Minister, Ngo Dinh Diem, proposing an immediate discussion on the country's unification. The South Viet-Nam Government on August 10 rejected the proposal, that is, in point of fact, refused to carry out the elections, though Ngo Dinh Diem did not dare to reject officially this important Geneva decision..." The journal notes that while Diem agreed in principle to "genuinely free elections", he alleged that such a ballot could not possibly be held in North Vietnam; therefore he flatly refused the DRV overtures. The commentary attacks the "demagogic character" of such tactics, charging that Diem has attacked those South Vietnamese citizens who voiced their desire for peaceful reunification and has ignored elementary democratic rights and freedoms. It accuses the Diem regime of committing more than 3,000 terroristic acts, resulting in more than 13,000 dead and wounded, and of having suppressed dozens of magazines and newspapers and imprisoned many journalists. Lastly, it charges that on 20 July, the day that negotiations between North and South Vietnam were to have opened, paid hoodlums attacked the residences of the Indian and Polish delegates of the International Supervisory and Control Commission. *("Attempts to Frustrate All-Viet-Nam Elections", International Affairs (Moscow), no. 9 (September 1955), pp. 114-16.)*

22 June-- In a joint declaration issued by India's Prime Minister Nehru and his Soviet counterpart, Nicholai Bulganin, the prime ministers "reiterate their conviction that the continued refusal to admit the Chinese People's Republic to the United Nations lies at the root of many troubles in the Far East and elsewhere." They laud the Geneva Accords as "a notable example of the use of the method of negotiation for solving international conflicts...the degree of success achieved in the practical implementation of these agreements will be regarded as a measure of value of the method of negotiation as a means of resolving international disputes." Moreover, in contrast to DRV pronouncements on the subject, the

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prime ministers assert that, although some obstructions are now appearing, "the implementation of the agreements has on the whole so far been satisfactory." *(New York Times, 23 June 1955, p. 2.)*

25 June-- In a unanimous report of the International Control Commission composed of representatives of Poland, India and Canada, North Vietnam is sharply criticized for refusing to let refugees leave its territories to go South. *(New York Times, 26 June 1955, p. 6.)*

1 July-- Krasnaya Zvezda, the official organ of the Soviet Ministry of Defense, reminds the United States that, although it did not sign the Geneva Accords, American leaders have frequently pledged to refrain from using force or the threat of force to prevent their implementation. The Soviets protest the American arming of the South Vietnamese Army and the inclusion of South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia "in the operational sphere of the aggressive Southeast Asian military bloc (SEATO)." They support the DRV's call for the convening of a consultative conference to discuss the forthcoming elections and denounce US plans to convene a separate conference in Saigon. *(Al. Leontyev, "Geneva Agreements Must Be Fulfilled", trans. DES, Krasnaya Zvezda, 1 July 1955, p. 4.)*

8 July-- In a joint communique issued on the departure from Peking of a DRV delegation headed by Ho Chi Minh, it is announced that China has agreed on a $338,000,000 economic aid program for North Vietnam. *(New York Times, 8 July 1955, p. 3.)*

15 July-- At a reception for visiting North Vietnamese President Ho Chi Minh, Soviet Premier Bulganin declares that the DRV is already "partly a member of our family of democratic nations." Unification and the achievement of other "great tasks", he states, would make the republic a full member of the family. *(New York Times, 16 July 1955, p. 3.)*

2 September-- In an article later published in the Cominform journal For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy, Ho Chi Minh states that although peace had been brought by the Geneva Conference, it could not be consolidated as long as the country remained partitioned. He charges the South Vietnamese regime with obstructing the scheduled elections and waging a campaign of terror. For the time being, however, peace and national reunification are to be of first priority. Peace especially is important for "we have to heal the war wounds, gradually raise the people's living standard, and build up a genuinely free and democratic new life in our country. To do so, we have...to rehabilitate our national economy..." In this task, he reports, the DRV has received promises of aid totalling 1,530,000 dongs from the Soviet Union and China.

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This assistance is to be supplemented by aid rendered by the people's democracies. With regard to other countries, Ho advocates peaceful and friendly relations based on the five principles of co-existence: mutual respect for territorial integrity and national sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference in internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful co-existence." As to France: "We continue to advocate that we can establish with it preferential economic and cultural relations in conditions of complete equality and mutual benefit..." *("Tenth Anniversary of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam", trans. DES, in Ho Chi Minh, Selected Articles and Speeches (Moscow: State Publishing House, Political Literature, 1959), pp. 604-12.)*

10 September-- The Fatherland Front of Vietnam is created by Hanoi as a broad organization of all Vietnamese regardless of religion, race, political tendency or social standing. Its guiding principle is to achieve the country's unity by peaceful means through "negotiations, democracy, united action, respect for the internal autonomy of all member organizations, friendly cooperation, criticism and self-criticism and mutual assistance." *(B.S.N. Murti, Vietnam Divided (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1964), pp. 106-07.)*

26 October-- Izvestia remarks that the South Vietnamese referendum of 23 October which deposed Bao Dai in favor of Ngo Dinh Diem was a "poorly played comedy" designed to establish a dictatorial regime guided by Washington. As such, it was a gross violation of the Geneva Agreements which provided for a "free declaration of will by the Vietnamese people." *(S. Kondrashov, "New Attempt to Strengthen Antipopular Regime in South Vietnam", Izvestia, 26 October 1955, p. 4.)*

November-- The Soviets comment on the "Third Interim Report of the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Cambodia". They note that the Commission has been concerned that the recent US-Cambodian military aid agreement may have gone beyond the provisions in the Geneva Accords which allowed for the securing of foreign aid for the purposes of effective national defense. In effect, it is suggested, this agreement, which contributes to the "defensive strength of the free world", furnishes the US "equipment, materials, services, and other assistance as may be mutually agreed upon in order to increase their capacity for individual or collective defense", and grants duties and tax exemption on "materials and equipment in transit through Cambodian territory and designed for other countries receiving military aid from the United States or for American military missions in such countries," etc., takes the character of a military alliance and thus constitutes a "serious threat

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to the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam. It gives the [US] the right to interfere in Cambodia's affairs and thus constitutes a serious threat to peace in Indo-China." At the same time, however, the Soviets mention that Cambodia had assured the Commission that "it would not join any military blocs, that it would pursue a policy of neutrality, and faithfully observe the Geneva Agreements." They note that "The Commission...expressed hope that the military aid to Cambodia under the new agreement would not run contrary to the Geneva Agreements on Cambodia. *("Third Interim Report of the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Cambodia", International Affairs (Moscow), no. 11 (November 1955), pp. 153-63.)*

25 November-- In a letter to Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov, Pham Van Dong argues that the Geneva Agreements had been discussed and signed, on the one hand by the DRV, and, on the other, by the French Government, both on its own behalf and on behalf of the South Vietnamese authorities. He contends that the fact that the South Vietnamese authorities took over large areas evacuated by the Vietnam People's Army means that they have tacitly recognized the Geneva Agreements. The French Government and the South Vietnamese authorities should, therefore, jointly bear responsibility for their fulfillment. *("The Geneva Agreements On Indo-China Must Be Observed", International Affairs (Moscow), no. 2 (February 1956), pp. 138-41.)*

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January-- The Soviet foreign affairs journal International Affairs reviews the major obstacles to peace in Indochina. It attacks the arguments of the Diem Government as "groundless", noting that the South Vietnamese regime "attempts to justify its refusal to consult with representatives of the Democratic Republic on elections, for example, by the fact that it did not sign the Geneva Agreements and hence does not consider itself bound by their provisions. But the Ngo Dinh Diem Government fails to mention that it controls the Viet-Nam territory south of the 17th parallel by virtue of the Geneva Agreements, wherefrom the units of the People's Army of Viet-Nam, who had reached the outskirts of Saigon, were withdrawn in accordance with the cease-fire agreement." Obviously, it is noted, the Diem Government recognizes only those articles of the Agreements which it likes and rejects those which it dislikes. "Rejecting a consultative conference with representatives of the Democratic Republic, the Government of South Viet-Nam argues in its letter of October 7 that the Final Declaration of the Geneva Conference provides for consultations, not a consultative conference. The absurdity of this argument is patent. It is clear to everybody

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that this is not a question of terminology, but of the essence of the matter, i.e., of discussion between representatives of the North and South Viet-Nam authorities of the most important problem of the Vietnamese people—the problem of free general elections to unify the country. The Ngo Dinh Diem Government refuses to negotiate with representatives of the D.R.V. on preparations for general free elections, thus ignoring the vital interests of the Vietnamese people and violating the principal provisions of the Geneva Agreements." The Soviets also reject South Vietnamese allegations that conditions in the North do not allow for the conduct of free elections. On the contrary, it is argued, the DRV has gone to some lengths to set up optimum conditions for reunification: "...the Democratic Government announced in February 1955 that it was ready to normalize relations between North and South and proposed extensive economic, cultural, sports, and other exchanges. But the Government of South Viet-Nam did not reply to these proposals." Moreover, "the Democratic Government proposed a unification programme taking into consideration the differences in the political and social conditions in North and South and the interests of the various social strata of the population. Under this programme, announced at the Fifth Session of the National Assembly in September 1955, a National Assembly, set up as a result of free general elections, will draw up a new constitution for the entire country; it also provides for immunity for all deputies including those of the opposition. The programme envisages the formation of a coalition government. It considers the possibility of granting each zone the right to adopt measures corresponding to the peculiarities of the particular zone, which do not contradict the general laws of the country." The article goes on to say that the French Government is trying to shrug off responsibility for enforcing the Geneva Agreements on the grounds that it has turned over the administration of the territory to the Ngo Dinh Diem Government. In turn, the Diem regime claims that it is not bound by the Accords since it did not sign them. The Soviets completely reject this argument, contending that the Government of South Vietnam was set up during the war as a puppet regime and enjoyed no influence among the populace. They note that Article 27 of the Geneva Accords states that "'[T]he signatories of the present Agreement and their successors in their functions shall be responsible for ensuring the observance and enforcement of the terms and provisions thereof.' If the French Government really intended to place the administration of the country in the hands of the Government of South Viet-Nam, it was also obliged to pass on to the latter, as its successor, its engagements under the Geneva Agreements." In addition, International Affairs complains about the "violation of the free elections provisions" of the Agreements concerning Laos: "The Final Declaration of the Geneva Conference states that the Conference took cognizance of the Laos Government's declaration that it was ready to effect such measures

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as would enable all citizens to take their place in the national community, in particular by participating in the forthcoming general elections, to be held in accordance with the Laos Constitution during 1955 by a secret ballot and on the condition that all the basic freedoms shall be respected. The significance of the elections planned for Laos is primarily in the political settlement, in the expectation of which the Resistance Forces of Laos (military units of Pathet Lao) were concentrated in two northern provinces of the country—Phong Saly and Sam Neua—in accordance with Article 14 of the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in Viet-Nam." Moreover, Moscow protests that in spite of "...its pledges to ensure general elections under conditions which guaranteed the basic freedoms, the Royal Government of Laos decided to hold its own elections on the basis of an anti-democratic election law enacted under colonialist pressure in 1951. This law has disfranchised all women and imposed many restrictions on the nomination of candidates. Without consulting the representatives of Pathet Lao, the government ordered the elections for December 25, 1955...The representatives of Pathet Lao proposed certain changes in the election law in order to ensure genuinely free elections and the equal participation of the Pathet Lao forces and former members of the Resistance Movement. The representatives of Pathet Lao proposed, in particular, to reduce the age limit of candidates from 30 to 25, to grant suffrage to women, and to set up mixed commissions to supervise the elections. Since the preparations for the elections had been unilaterally begun by the government, the representatives of Pathet Lao proposed to extend the time for nominating candidates and for the election campaign...The Laos Government rejected these proposals and broke off its talks with them. Instead of complying with the Geneva Agreements, which provide for a political settlement, the Royal Government of Laos, headed by Prime Minister Katay and inspired and supported by the Americans, has been gradually invading the Phong Saly and Sam Neua provinces allotted for the concentration of the Pathet Lao forces. It has moved its troops into these provinces in an attempt to dislodge the Pathet Lao armed forces from the districts they have occupied. The penetration of the government troops into the Phong Saly and Sam Neua provinces is the cause of the frequent armed clashes between these troops and Pathet Lao units—clashes which aggravate the situation in the country. On March 9, 1955, representatives of Pathet Lao and the Royal Government published a joint communiqué recognizing the necessity to end these military clashes. An agreement in which both parties renewed their pledge to prevent armed clashes was signed on October 11, 1955, in Rangoon by Prince Souphanouvong, representative of the Pathet Lao forces, and Katay, Prime Minister of the Royal Government. Despite these agreements, however, the infiltration of the Royal troops continues and armed clashes

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recur on an even greater scale...In his letters of November 10 and December 14, 1955, addressed to the Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Conference, Souphanouvong called the attention of the Co-Chairmen to violations of the Geneva Agreements by the Royal Government. He voiced his resolute protest against the preparations for unilateral elections in Laos. He once more declared the readiness of the Pathet Lao forces to conscientiously carry out the Geneva Agreements and reminded the Co-Chairmen of the responsibility borne by the Royal Government of Laos and the French Government for carrying out the Geneva Agreements, both as regards the cessation of hostilities and the political settlement in Laos...On December 25, 1955, the Royal Government of Laos held unilateral elections, which excluded the Pathet Lao forces and former members of the Resistance Movement. With American support and French connivance, although the French had signed the Geneva Agreements, the Royal Government of Laos violated the most important provisions of these Agreements...The incontestable fact that the Laos Resistance Forces had not capitulated in the anti-colonial war but agreed to cease hostilities on the condition that the lawful rights and claims of the people of Laos be recognized, as provided for by the Geneva Conference, cannot be disregarded. The Pathet Lao forces concentrated in two provinces and relinquished their positions in the other ten in the hope that the Geneva Agreements would be conscientiously carried out and that political issues would be solved by free general elections. The unilateral elections held by the Katay Government complicate the situation. The political problems in Laos remain outstanding and await settlement." *(A. Karpikhin, "The Interests of Peace Demand a Political Settlement in Viet-Nam and Laos", International Affairs (Moscow), no. 1 (January 1956), pp. 51-58.)*

17 January-- In a article appearing in People's Daily, organ of the Communist Party of China, a high-ranking official writing under the pseudonym "Observer" argues that the Geneva Agreements had not been reached because of the threat of "joint action" in Indochina and the dispatch to the South China seas of two US carriers laden with atomic bombs. Rather, he declares, events at that time had been determined by a general "will for peace". *(New York Times, 18 January 1956, p. 11.)*

25 January-- In a letter to the British Government, Chinese Premier Chou En-lai states that his Government "...deems it necessary that another Geneva Conference on Indo-China be convened by the Co-Chairman of the Geneva Conference, to discuss the question of implementation of the Geneva Agreements in Viet-Nam. The Chinese Government also holds that the three member countries of the International Commission

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in Viet-Nam—India, Poland and Canada—should be invited to take part in this conference." *("Letter from Premier Chou En-lai to the British Government, January 25, 1956", Documents Relating to British Involvement in the Indo-China Conflict, 1945-1965, p. 118. Quoted in Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs, Mission to Hanoi (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), p. 222.)*

23 February-3 March-- On 23 February, the DRV issues a note calling on the chairmen of the Geneva Conference to convoke a new international meeting on Indochina, to include the members of the three-nation supervisory commission as well as the participants in the original Geneva gathering. On 3 March, the eve of South Vietnam's elections for a Constituent Assembly, the Soviet Government newspaper, Izvestia, supports this call and charges that the balloting to take place on the following day is an outright violation of the Accords and will result in a hardening of the division within Vietnam. It says this situation is "fraught with serious consequences for the destiny of peace and security in this part of the globe." *(New York Times, 4 March 1956, p. 21.)*

April-- The Soviets comment on the elections for a Constituent Assembly in South Vietnam. They claim that this balloting was merely a new maneuver to frustrate reunification through the Geneva Agreements and that Ngo Dinh Diem's electoral law was specifically designed to prevent the election of members of the Resistance Movement or of any genuine opponents of his regime. They charge that all candidates unsuitable to Diem were either arrested or forced to withdraw their candidacy under threat of reprisals. Balloting was accompanied by an intensified campaign of terror against the Vietnam "patriots". *(A. Karpikhin, "The United States Takes Over in South Vietnam", International Affairs (Moscow), no. 4 (April 1956), pp. 83-91.)*

5 April-- It is announced that Britain and the Soviet Union have agreed in principle to a high level meeting on maintaining the Indochina cease-fire agreement. The meeting had been proposed following a December report by the three-nation International Commission for Supervision and Control in Vietnam in which it was stated that the Commission had been receiving "unsatisfactory" cooperation from both North and South Vietnam in its efforts to police the cease-fire. *(New York Times, 6 April 1956, p. 4.)*

11 April-- Testifying before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, US Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs Walter S. Robertson says that the North Vietnamese have about doubled their effective strength since the Geneva cease-fire and increased their artillery firepower sixfold. The

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equipment and training have been supplied by the Chinese Communists. In Laos, the Pathet Lao still occupy the major portions of Phong Saly and Sam Neua provinces, bordering the Chinese mainland: "They refuse to turn over the administration of these provinces to the royal government. And it is perfectly obvious that their objective is to bring about a de facto division of Laos, as they have in Korea, Vietnam and Germany." *(84th Cong. 2nd Sess., Mutual Security Act of 1956, Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives (Washington: GPO, 1956), pp. 221-22.)*

24 April-- In a speech closing the Ninth (Enlarged) Session of the Central Committee of the Lao Dong (Worker's) Party, a meeting characterized by much unrest and debate, Ho Chi Minh offers an assessment of the great issues raised at the 20th Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Clearly, a number of differences with Khrushchev emerge in his speech concerning the major theses raised by the Congress. While supporting the principle of collective leadership and opposing the cult of the individual, Ho also notes that a "balanced view" of Stalin and his acts must be maintained. In contrast to the almost wholly negative attitude toward the late dictator taken by the Congress, he says that "Comrade Stalin made great contributions to the Revolution, but he also made serious mistakes." In addition, while Ho accepts the Soviet formula of a "peaceful road to socialism", he clearly has doubts whether that model will be relevant to the situation in Vietnam: "While recognizing that war may be averted, we must be vigilant to detect the warmongers' schemes; for as long as imperialism exists, the danger of war still exists...While recognizing that in certain countries the road to socialism may be a peaceful one, we should be aware of this fact: In countries where the machinery of state, the armed forces, and the police of the bourgeois class are still strong, the proletarian class still has to prepare for armed struggle...While recognizing the possibility of reunifying Viet-Nam by peaceful means, we should always remember that our people's principal enemies are the American imperialists and their agents who still occupy half our country and are preparing for war; therefore, we should firmly hold aloft the banner of peace and enhance our vigilance." Finally, his continued stress on the need for "self-criticism" and his pointing to the Soviet Communists as the Party leading the way in the use of this technique can only be a veiled announcement that since Moscow has itself admitted that its policies are not always "inevitably correct", the DRV will not, in the

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future, be automatically bound to follow Soviet advice.* *("Speech Closing the Ninth (Enlarged) Session of the Central Committee of the Vietnam Worker's Party", trans. DES, in Ho Chi Minh, Selected Articles and Speeches (Moscow: State Publishing House, Political Literature, 1959), pp. 641-43.)*

10 May-- A Peking radio broadcast reports on the London meeting between Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Gromyko and the Marquess of Reading, British Minister of State for Foreign Affairs. According to the Chinese texts, the Geneva Conference co-chairmen "expressed their concern" that nothing had thus far been done to carry out the political provisions of the Geneva Agreements. The message is also said to have attached "great importance" to maintaining the armistice pending reunification elections. *(New York Times, 13 May 1956, p. 38.)*

11 May-- DRV Premier Pham Van Dong addresses a letter to Ngo Dinh Diem again calling for a consultative conference to arrange reunification elections. Dong proposes that a unified national assembly, to be chosen in the elections, should appoint a coalition government for all Vietnam. At the same time, he calls for the continued implementation of the cease-fire and the giving of "guarantees" by the two sides to the supervisory commission in order to enable it to continue its work. Pending elections, the Northern leader urges the restoration of "normal relations" between the two zones "in every respect". *(New York Times, 13 May 1956, p. 38.)*

19 June-- Ho Chi Minh, in a letter to the cadres from South Vietnam regrouped in the North, states that DRV policy is "to consolidate North Vietnam and to keep in mind the south." A reconstructed North will serve as a prerequisite and springboard for the eventual reunification of the country: "North Vietnam is the foundation, the root of the struggle for complete national liberation and the reunification of the country. That is why everything we are doing in North Vietnam is aimed at strengthening both the north

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*Indeed, the DRV in this period was beginning to show considerable discontent with Soviet advice. Largely because of pressure from the Soviets and the Chinese, North Vietnam made substantial concessions to the "imperialists" at Geneva. Now, with the scheduled nationwide elections sabatoged by Diem, the DRV's hopes of quickly recovering its evacuated territories in the South and reunifying the nation were dimmed. - DES

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and the progressive forces in the south. Therefore...to work in North Vietnam is the same as struggling in the south; it is to struggle for South Vietnam and for the whole of Vietnam...North Vietnam is being increasingly consolidated to become a firm support, a strong base for our entire people's struggle." *("Letter to the Cadres From South Vietnam Regrouped in the North", trans. DES, in Ho Chi Minh, Selected Articles and Speeches (Moscow: State Publishing House, Political Literature, 1959), pp. 654-57.)*

8 July-- In Moscow, a joint statement signed by Cambodian Prince Norodom Sihanouk and Soviet Premier Bulganin says that the Soviet Union has confirmed its friendship and economic relations with Cambodia. A plan for the exchange of ambassadors is formally announced. In addition, Soviet experts would shortly go to Cambodia to meet with experts there and work out the details of the economic and cultural accords. *(New York Times, 7 July 1956, p. 9.)*

5 August-- Peking radio reports that the Royal Laotian Government has agreed to consider peace terms offered by the Pathet Lao. Five points proposed by the Communists are to be explored: 1. The principle of freedom, democracy and free participation in election campaigns. Included in this point are to be freedom of speech, press and assembly. 2. Protection of the legitimate interests of the Communist forces. 3. Nation-wide free general elections and a coalition government. All citizens able to read and write should be entitled to vote and campaign for election regardless of sex. It is in this way that the country will be unified. 4. Adoption of the five principles of co-existence. 5. Settlement of the issues in the provinces of Phong Saly and Sam Neua through peaceful means. In addition, the broadcast quotes Pathet Lao Prince Souphanouvong as insisting that in guerrilla areas and bases of the Communist forces all of the "democratic freedoms" instituted during the war of resistance be recognized. In accordance with the Geneva pact, the Government must "recognize and guarantee the right to carry on legitimate activities throughout the country for a patriotic front and for youth, peasants and women's organizations on the side of the Pathet Lao forces." *(New York Times, 6 August 1956, p. 2.)*

5-8 August-- Negotiations between the Pathet Lao and the Royal Laotian Government end with the signing of two joint communiques. According to the Soviet journal International Affairs, the two parties "announced their adherence to the policy of peace, neutrality and the Five Principles of

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peaceful co-existence. The communique pointed out that the two sides had agreed that Laos would not join any military alliances and would not permit foreign military bases, with the exception of those provided for by the Geneva Agreements, on her territory. Pending a political settlement, the two sides would order cessation of hostilities in Sam Neua and Phong Saly. Prince Souvanna Phouma's Government declared that it would grant all the rights and democratic freedoms to the people, including the right to take part in elections and organize election campaigns. Furthermore, the Royal Government undertook not to discriminate against the Pathet-Lao units and former members of the Resistance...The communique went on to say that the administration of Sam Neua and Phong Saly provinces would be placed under the authority of the Royal Government and that the two sides would reorganize the administrative bodies there to accord with the Royal administrative system. The Pathet-Lao forces would also be reorganized and placed under the Royal Army Command...The final communique on August 8 contained a number of supplementary agreements, providing for free and secret general elections with the participation of Pathet-Lao personnel and former members of the Resistance, and for the formation of a coalition Government to include representatives of the Pathet-Lao units and other parties and groups. The two sides also agreed to set up joint political and military commissions to discuss ways and means of implementing the Vientiane agreements." *("Peaceful Settlement in Laos", International Affairs (Moscow), no. 9 (September 1956), pp. 122-23; Complete texts of both agreements may be found in "Negotiations on an Internal Settlement in Laos", International Affairs (Moscow), no. 11 (November 1956), pp. 169-70.)*

10 August-- In a note to the British and Soviet Foreign Ministers, DRV Premier and Foreign Minister Pham Van Dong proposes that the two co-chairmen of the Geneva Conference recommend that the South Vietnamese administration immediately communicate dates for the beginning of a consultative conference and general elections. If the Diem Government refuses, the DRV requests the co-chairmen to convene a new Geneva Conference, to include the members of the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Vietnam, for the purpose of discussing the implementation of the Accords. In the Hanoi broadcast that announces this request, it is noted that Dong had earlier pledged that if elections were held all questions connected with their organization and supervision would be submitted to both sides for mutual agreement. *(New York Times, 15 August 1956, p. 5.)*

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1956

18 August-- Ho Chi Minh reports on the extensive disruptions caused by the excessively brutal nature of the administration of the land reform program in North Vietnam. He notes that land reform is an "earth-shaking" revolution. Saboteurs are rife. Moreover, some of "our cadres have not thoroughly grasped the land reform policy or correctly followed the mass line. The leadership of the Party Central Committee and of the Government is sometimes lacking in concreteness, and control and encouragement are disregarded." Thus, extensive errors have been committed. These have been reviewed by the Central Committee and the Government, and plans have been drawn up to resolutely "correct them with a view to uniting the cadres and the people, stabilizing the countryside, and promoting production." *("Letter to the Peasants and Cadres on the Successful Completion of Land Reform in North Vietnam", trans. DES, in Ho Chi Minh, Selected Articles and Speeches (Moscow: State Publishing House, Political Literature, 1959), pp. 682-84.)*

22 November-- Chou En-lai, en route to Eastern Europe in wake of the Hungarian crisis, stops in North Vietnam. The joint communique issued on his departure may be seen as an attempt to prod the Soviet Union and the other Geneva participants into taking more effective action on the issue of reunification. The two prime ministers (Chou and Pham Van Dong) note that "the countries participating in the 1954 Geneva Conference had the irrefutable responsibility to stop the development of such a situation [i.e. the violation of the Accords], and that they should take effective joint measures to ensure full implementation of the Geneva Agreements." *(Harold C. Hinton, Communist China in World Politics (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1966), p. 338.)*

27 November-- While stopping in Cambodia on his way to New Delhi, Chou En-lai seeks to reassure the small countries of Asia (which have been alarmed by the Soviet invasion of Hungary) that China would vigilantly avoid the "error" of misusing its power. Prior to his departure, he signs a joint communique with Cambodian Premier San Yun reaffirming each country's adherence to the five principles of co-existence. *(New York Times, 29 November 1956, p. 24.)*

31 December-- A joint announcement by the Pathet Lao and the Government of Prince Souvanna Phouma discloses the creation of a Government of National Unity for Laos. It is said that the two sides are "in agreement on the right to vote for all citizens of both sexes," on civil liberties and on the issue of the armed forces. *(New York Times, 1 January 1957, p. 10.)*

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1957

1957-- The International Control Commission issues a report on violations of the Geneva Agreements. In Chapter VI: "Cooperation of the Parties to the Agreement", it is noted that the "...Commission recorded a violation under Article 14(c)...and a few violations under Article 16 and 17 of the Agreement by the French High Command and the Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam, and none by the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. The violations of Articles 16 and 17 mentioned above concern introduction into South Viet Nam of United States military personnel in five United States military aircraft, a few aircraft wheel tires, 1,000 revolvers, and 610 cases of revolver ammunition...As the Government of the Republic of Viet Nam did not afford the necessary assistance and co-operation to the Commission in cases under Article 14(c) and, in particular, decided not to send any more replies to the Commission's communications and not to permit the deployment of any Mobile Teams for investigation of complaints under this Article in South Viet Nam, the Commission addressed a special letter to the Co-Chairmen on April 11, 1957...and expressed its grave concern to the Government of the Republic of Viet Nam...[T]he Commission has not been able to decide the cases of 122 alleged civilian internees/prisoners-of-war under Article 21 in South Viet Nam, as the Government of the Republic of Viet Nam failed to produce the relevant documents and dossiers in the manner required by the Commission...In North Viet Nam, the Commission has not been able to supervise continuously, under Article 36(d) of the Agreement, the Phuc Hoa section of the land frontier through its Mobile Team set up under Article 35..., as the PAV High Command did not co-operate with the Commission in this matter...The Government of the Republic of Viet Nam did not, in all cases, give the Commission advance notification under Articles 16(f) and 17(e) of the arrival of military personnel and war materials respectively." In Chapter VII: "Conclusions", it is noted that "In...the Sixth Interim Report...the Commission had referred to the situation which arose as a consequence of the withdrawal of the French High Command from Viet Nam. As was mentioned in the Commission's message, the Government of the Republic of Viet Nam had stated that it was prepared to offer effective co-operation to the Commission but that it was not prepared to assume responsibility for the implementation of the Geneva Agreements in Viet Nam. While the major development had its origin during the period of the Sixth Interim Report, it was during the period under review that its effects on the work of the Commission were felt fully... A major difficulty facing the Commission arises from

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the failure to hold consultations between the two parties and free nation-wide elections with a view to reunification of Viet Nam...The Commission is naturally anxious about the duration of its stay in Viet Nam which is conditioned by the political settlement in this country, as envisaged in the Final Declaration of the Geneva Conference." *(David Schoenbrun, Vietnam: How We Got In, How to Get Out (New York: Atheneum, 1968, pp. 134-36.)*

15 February-- Ho Chi Minh, reporting on the 6th Session of the DRV National Assembly (First Legislature), notes that although "serious mistakes were committed, land reform has obtained great results insofar as it has overthrown the feudal landlord class and given land to the tillers. The mistakes are now being rectified. We must resolutely correct these errors in order to make land reform a success..." He states that "[o]urs is a system of people's democracy; we must broaden democracy toward the people and strengthen dictatorship vis-a-vis the people's enemy. Only by strengthening dictatorship toward the enemy can we defend our people's freedom and democracy." In order to "...achieve national reunification, all our people must unite closely, make further efforts to consolidate the North and make it a basis for national liberation." *("Report to the Meeting of Representatives of the Hanoi People on the Success of the Sixth Session of the National Assembly (First Legislature)", in Bernard Fall, ed., Ho Chi Minh on Revolution (New York: New American Library, 1967), pp. 278-81.)*

15 May-- A Foreign Ministry communique broadcast from Hanoi charges the United States with introducing more than 2,000 military personnel into South Vietnam in violation of the Geneva Armistice Agreement. It also says that North Vietnam has demobilized 80,000 men and reduced the national defense budget. The broadcast does not mention the presence of Chinese advisors in the North. *(New York Times, 16 May 1957, p. 11.)*

16 May-- At a meeting for the ideological remolding of general and field officers of the DRV Army, Ho Chi Minh emphasizes the need to correct mistakes and achieve the economic rehabilitation of North Vietnam. He adds that simultaneous with this process the struggle for reunification by peaceful means will be carried on. *("Instructions Given at the Meeting for Ideological Remolding of General and Field Officers", in Bernard Fall, ed., Ho Chi Minh On Revolution (New York: New American Library, 1967), p. 283.)*

20 July-- Peking radio announces that DRV Premier Pham Van Dong has formally proposed that North and South Vietnam hold talks to discuss elections for reunifying the country. In a letter to South Vietnamese President Diem, Dong urges the re-establishment of normal relations between North and South "in all

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fields". He charges the US with having increased South Vietnam's armed forces and with having illegally introduced new military men and materials into the South and adding to military bases in that area. *(New York Times, 21 July 1957, p. 9.)*

30 July-- US Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs Walter S. Robertson tells the Senate Appropriations Committee that the Communists are making an intensified effort to penetrate "neutral" Cambodia. During the last year, trade and aid offers have been made by three European bloc countries. Moreover, the Chinese Communists have agreed to provide Cambodia $22.4 million in aid over a 2-year period and trade up to $14 million each way annually. Chinese aid goods and "technicians" have already arrived in Cambodia. *(85th Cong. 1st Sess., Mutual Security Appropriations for 1958, Hearings before the Committee on Appropriations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1957), pp. 349-50.)*

7 September-- Ho Chi Minh, at the opening of the first theoretical course of the Nguyen Ai Quoc School, lectures cadres on the theoretical tasks confronting the Party in the effort to build socialism and eventually, after a long and hard struggle, to achieve national reunification by peaceful means. Emphasis is placed on the need for independent thinking and the avoidance of mechanically applying the experiences of "brother countries". Clearly, Ho is asserting his independence from both the Soviets and the Chinese, while taking pains to remain in the good graces of both powers. In particular, his support of Chinese claims to be "the model of the Communist Party in a semicolonial and semifeudal country" immediately follows and balances praise of the "Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the first party which blazed the trail of liberation for mankind." Moreover, a lengthy attack on the evil of dogmatism, a major Soviet concern, is followed by a warning against the dangers of revisionism in order to appease Chinese sensitivities. *("Speech Opening the First Theoretical Course of Nguyen Ai Quoc School", in Bernard Fall, ed., Ho Chi Minh On Revolution (New York: New American Library, 1967), pp. 284-90.)*

6-20 November-- Sixty-four Communist parties gather in Moscow to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution. The meeting approves a "Declaration" on all aspects of policy. Generally speaking, the "Moscow Declaration" is a masterpiece of calculated ambiguity, capable of obscuring the sharp differences of opinion that are beginning to arise within the international movement. Both "revisionism" and "dogmatism" are condemned.

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Recommendations for more frequent international conferences are made. It is stated that "[s]o long as imperialism exists there will always be soil for aggressive wars." At this time, however, the "forces of peace have so grown that there is a real possibility of averting wars..." It is clear, however, that this statement is directed to large-scale wars, not "Wars of National Liberation": "The meeting considers that in the present situation the strengthening of the unity and fraternal co-operation of the socialist countries, the Communist and Workers' parties and the solidarity of the international working-class, national liberation and democratic movements acquire special significance." *(Extracts of text in David Floyd, Mao Against Khrushchev (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964), pp. 247-51.)*

12-18 November-- On 12 November, the Vientiane agreements dealing with the procedures for integrating the Pathet Lao forces with the National Army are signed. These agreements also provide for procedures for transferring local governmental offices to officials designated by the Royal Laotian Government, it being understood that the RLG would appoint members of the Pathet Lao to certain specified local government posts. The political arrangement also provides for a national coalition government. Unlike in the abortive negotiations held between neutralist Prince Souvanna Phouma and Pathet Lao leader Souphanouvong during the previous year, no reference is made to the issue of neutrality. The coalition cabinet, including Prince Souphanouvong and Phoumi Vong Vichit from the Neo Lao Hak Xat, is invested on 18 November. This same day, Souphanouvong declares "the presentation of Sam Neua and Phong Saly provinces, including the administrative organizations, troops, officials, and all weapons and equipment of the Pathet Lao, to His Majesty the King of Laos." *(Texts in Foreign Broadcasts Information Service, Daily Report, 15 November 1957, pp. III 1-4 and 18 November 1957, pp. III 1-4.)*

December-- In answer to questions submitted by two Brazilian journalists, Nikita Khrushchev lists the major areas of international tension. He notes that due to US obstruction of the Geneva reunification clause South Vietnam is "another point where hostilities may break out." *("Khrushchov [sic] Answers Questions Submitted by Journalists Victorio Martorelli and Tito Fleury", International Affairs (Moscow), no. 12 (December 1957), p. 8.)*

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24 January-- In November 1957, the active fighting between Pathet Lao and Royal Laotian Government troops was ended as a result of protracted negotiations. The two northern provinces held by the Pathet Lao were restored to the Government, and the Pathet Lao army was disbanded except for two units (battalions with a combined strength of about 1,600 men) which became part of the Royal Army and were stationed at separate locations. The Pathet Lao is brought into the Government and given two posts: Minister of Plans and Minister of Religion. Elections are to be held on 4 May of the following year. On 24 January, the Pathet Lao leader, Prince Souphanouvong, disavows his allegiance to Communism and declares that he is no longer the enemy of the United States. He indicates that years of loyalty to Ho Chi Minh had brought little but misery to the people in the two northern provinces controlled by the Pathet Lao. Now that integration of those two provinces with the rest of the country is complete, he says, "we are no longer anti-American." In fact, if the Pathet Lao wins the forthcoming elections US aid would be accepted for decades to come. In Washington, State Department officials express fear that Souphanouvong may be trying to quiet suspicions both in the West and in Laos while still aiming at subverting the country. *(New York Times, 24 January 1958, p. 6.)*

7-14 March-- The Soviet Government on 14 March issues a statement supporting recent DRV efforts to normalize relations between North and South Vietnam. The USSR condemns attempts by the United States to militarize South Vietnam and include it in SEATO, thus converting it into "an arsenal" aimed at the DRV and the Chinese People's Republic. Pham Van Dong's letter of 7 March to the South Vietnamese authorities is praised as a genuine attempt to reduce tensions between the two zones and prepare the groundwork for reunification. That note proposed a meeting between representatives of the North and the South to "discuss jointly the question of reducing the size of their armed forces and to study measures for the establishment of trade between the two parts of the country..." The Soviets claim that, contrary to the belligerent actions of the South Vietnamese authorities, the DRV has reduced its armed forces by 80,000 men and also reduced military expenditures. They note that the reunification of Vietnam in accordance with the Geneva Agreements is the "main requisite for lasting peace in Indochina and will contribute to the consolidation of peace in Southeast Asia." *("USSR Government Statement", trans. DES, Pravda, 14 March 1958, p. 4.)*

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21 March-- Admiral B. Stump, CINCPAC, testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, points out that the DRV has about twice as many soldiers on active duty as do the South Vietnamese. Moreover, North Vietnam has reserves of about 200,000 men. Stump suggests that "[t]hey are much stronger. They have reequipped themselves from China, and there is no doubt that they could march clear across South Vietnam...They could undoubtedly win a war if we did not come in to help. But I do think that the terrain being what it is that the Army of South Vietnam could delay them long enough for them to get help from the outside." *(85th Cong. 2nd Sess., Mutual Security Act of 1958, Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate (Washington: GPO, 1958), pp. 103-22.)*

26 March-- In an interview with a Soviet correspondent, Ho Chi Minh notes that although there has as yet been no response from the South Vietnamese authorities to the DRV initiative of 7 March, "we are firmly convinced that the peaceful reunification of our country is possible..." *(A. Kurov, "Interview with President Ho Chi Minh", New Times, no. 15, April 1958, p. 6.)*

23 April-- North Vietnam asks the International Supervisory and Control Commission to investigate and stop mass reprisals that South Vietnamese authorities allegedly are taking against former anti-French resistance members. *(New York Times, 24 April 1958, p. 6.)*

31 May-- In response to a Canadian suggestion that the International Supervisory and Control Commission be withdrawn from Laos, DRV Foreign Minister Ung Van Khiem issues an official statement that "[p]eace in Indochina is indivisible: this was recognized during the discussions at the Geneva conference and confirmed by the spirit of the final declaration, especially in Para. 4 and 5. In the light of Art. 39, 46, and 25 of the Geneva agreements concerning respectively Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia, it is clear that the three international commissions should continue their activities as long as the political problems are not completely solved in the three countries. In the present situation in Indochina, the winding up of the activities of the ISCC in one country, Laos for instance, without taking into account the settlement of the political problems in the other two countries, would have dangerous repercussions on the effective implementation of the Geneva agreements and on the activities of the ISCC as a whole. Such winding up runs counter to

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the spirit and letter of the Geneva agreements." Therefore, it is stated, the DRV "holds that, in the present circumstances, the maintenance of the ISCC in Laos is essential; nevertheless, its activities and establishment could be reduced in conformity with Art. 39 of the agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Laos." *(A. M. Halpern and H. B. Fredman, Communist Strategy in Laos (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, RM-2561, 14 June 1960), pp. 16-17.)*

28 June-- Contrary to the Hanoi strategy of peaceful reunification, the early forms of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, which alternately were called the Voice of Nambo and Resistance Veterans, as well as the Liberation Front, openly called for an armed uprising to overthrow Diem. Kahin and Lewis note that "every one of the numerous recorded Hanoi broadcasts dealing with the Front attacked it violently. As early as June 28, 1958, the Front was accused of 'using their broadcasts to distort Marxist-Leninist theories.' ...Front statements...were denounced...as 'vilest slander and distortion of the truth.'" *(George M. Kahin and John W. Lewis, The United States In Vietnam (New York: Dial Press, 1967), p. 111.)*

July-- At the request of the Royal Laotian Government, the International Control Commission set up under the Geneva Accords of 1954 adjourns and departs from Laos. It appears that the Geneva Accords as they apply to Laos are well on their way to being fulfilled. *(85th Cong. 2nd Sess., Foreign Assistance and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1963, Hearings before the Committee on Appropriations, U. S. Senate (Washington: GPO, 1962), p. 712.)*

9 August-- The North Vietnamese Government declares that the suspension on 9 July of the operations of the International Supervisory and Control Commission in Laos is "contrary to the legal content of the Geneva agreements on Indochina" and will provide "greater opportunities for the United States imperialistis to intensify their interventionist and war-seeking policy in Indochina." *(New York Times, 10 August 1958, p. 22.)*

24 August-- China expresses its readiness to "further assist Cambodia...in building small-sized iron and steel works, prospecting for underground fuel resources, constructing other enterprises and searching for other materials deemed necessary." The People's Republic is already providing Cambodia with consumer goods and medical equipment and is assisting in constructing irrigation works and other

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enterprises under its 1956 aid program amounting to about $22,000,000. *(New York Times, 25 August 1958, p. 4.)*

December-- Writing several years after the fact, French scholar Jean Lacouture writes that "[w]hile the Saigon government rebuffed every advance from the North as "subversive"...it reoriented its aggressive policy and concentrated its blows on a new target. A new enemy was substituted for the sects that seemed to have been crushed: the Viet Cong, or Vietnamese communism. In 1955 every opponent had been denounced as a left-over from the "feudal rebels" supported by colonialism. After 1956 every opponent was called a communist...A tremendous war machine was then set up against the Viet Cong. At first the struggle was conducted by simple means: concentration camps. After raids on regions reputed to be "rotten," several thousand "Reds" were placed in concentration camps like the one in Phu Loi, about thirty miles from Saigon. In December 1958 a report of poisonings created a scandal; the rumor, taken up noisily by Northern propaganda, was to the effect that of six thousand prisoners more than a thousand had died of poisoning. From Hanoi, Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap denounced these "atrocities" to the International Control Commission. But the Saigon government opposed an inquiry that had been demanded by various international personalities, including several British Labour deputies. It turned out that the number of deaths had been inflated by the opposition; but the attitude of the Southern regime indicated that it definitely had things to hide." *(Jean Lacouture, Vietnam, Between Two Truces (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 29.)*

22 December-- Writing considerably after the fact, Bernard Fall comments on a four-point Hanoi program of 22 December which, "with proper safeguards, could have become...an ideal normalization program between the two Vietnams..." This offer called for "...(1) military de-escalation in both zones and the withdrawal of all foreign military personnel; (2) commercial exchanges between both zones; (3) de-escalation of the propaganda war; and (4) "as a first step toward normal movement between the two zones," exchanges of cultural, scientific, economic, and sports groups, and visits by women and children separated from their heads of family. That program was eminently workable. It did not commit Saigon to anything over which it had no control or which it (or Hanoi, for that matter) could not stop at will." Fall

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notes that Diem did not even bother to reply to Pham Van Dong's letter containing these proposals: "It was only this consistent rejection of normalization overtures, plus the gradual disintegration of the Diem regime under revolutionary pressures from both sides—after all, its own army tried to overthrow it three times, and finally did—which provided North Viet-Nam with an almost irresistible rationale for participating in the widening insurgency." *(Bernard Fall, The Two Vietnams (New York: Praeger, 1967), pp. 336-37.)*

1959

1-6 January-- DRV Premier Pham Van Dong proposes negotiations with Laos to settle frontier disputes between the two countries. This offer is made in a note to Laotian Premier Phoui Sananikone on 6 January which also contains the charge that Laotian planes have violated DRV air space ten times in the last year. In an earlier note of 1 January, it had been claimed that Laotian troops had violated the North Vietnamese border in the Huong Lap area. *(New York Times, 7 January 1959, p. 13.)*

19 January-- Pham Van Dong addresses a letter concerning Laos to the chairman of the International Supervisory and Control Commission requesting that it "...resume its activities to conduct investigations and examinations of...violations [of the Geneva agreements], and will in consequence take appropriate and energetic measures to insure respect for, and correct implementation of, the Geneva agreements." *(A. M. Halpern and H. B. Fredman, Communist Strategy in Laos (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, RM-2561, 14 June 1960), p. 28.)*

21 January-- With the worsening situation in Laos, Peking's People's Daily praises the DRV for its extreme patience in light of the "coldness" and "unreasonableness" of the Laotian authorities. An implicit warning to Vientiane is contained at the close of the statement: "One is particularly uneasy to note the fact that the extreme pro-American elements in Laos have even disregarded the obligations which the Kingdom of Laos had undertaken under the Geneva agreement and publically declared that their country is within the "defense" area of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization and may solicit, whenever necessary, intervention by this aggressive organization. The connection between this issue and the machinations of U.S. imperialism is obvious. The U.S. propaganda machine has made a fanfare about the menace posed by this issue to stability in Southeast Asia,

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and called vociferously that action be taken by the aggressive Southeast Asia Treaty Organization...The U.S. imperialists in particular are still engineering, as before, conflicts among the numerous countries in the Afro-Asian region, so as to create pretexts for their intervention." *(A. M. Halpern and H. B. Fredman, Communist Strategy in Laos (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, RM-2561, 14 June 1960), p. 28.)*

23 January-- A DRV Government memorandum is released recapitulating all of the previous charges relating to border violations of the Laos-North Vietnam frontier. The United States is said to consider Laos "as a dagger pointed at the heart of Southeast Asian countries" and to have intervened in order to "...make the Kingdom of Laos forsake its policy of peace and neutrality and drag it into the SEATO military bloc, and to turn Laos into a U.S. military base for the preparation of a new war." The border incidents are designated as a US-inspired provocation aimed at creating "an artificial tension favorable to the setting up of a dictatorial regime" similar to those of Thailand and Pakistan, which could then be used to "persecute the former resistance members", sabotage the Geneva Agreements, and draw Laos into SEATO. *(A. M. Halpern and H. B. Fredman, Communist Strategy in Laos (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, RM-2561, 14 June 1960), p. 29.)*

24 January-- Premier Phoui Sananikoni organizes a Government which gives strong representation to young anti-Communist leaders. Army officers are brought into the Cabinet for the first time. The Premier forms his regime under a mandate granted the previous week by the National Assembly which gives him full power to rule without reference to the Assembly for a period of one year. The new Cabinet represents a marked success for the Committee for Defense of the National Interests, an organization of young civilian and army leaders seeking to push social and economic reform and combat Communist influence. Western observers generally regard these events as a significant reverse for pro-Communist elements in Laos. *(New York Times, 25 January 1959, p. 30.)*

19 February-- Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi issues an official statement that he is "...authorized by the Government of the People's Republic of China to declare solemnly: China, being a participant in the Geneva conference and a neighbor of Laos, cannot but express grave concern

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over the fact that the United States is openly instigating and supporting the Royal Laotian Government to repudiate the Geneva agreements, creating tension in Laos (i.e., attempting to dismantle the NLHX)* and sabotaging the peace in Indochina...The Chinese Government firmly opposes the unilateral tearing up of the Geneva agreements by the Royal Laotian Government. The Royal Laotian Government must bear all consequences. The 1954 Geneva conference and the agreements reached at it have nothing to do with the United Nations. The schemes of the United States to sabotage the Geneva agreements and carry out military intervention in Laos are absolutely impermissible." *(A. M. Halpern and H. B. Fredman, Communist Strategy in Laos (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, RM-2561, 14 June 1960), pp. 35-36.)*

14 March-- Peking's New China (Hsinhua) News Agency claims that "[l]ast September, when the remnant Chiang Kai-shek troops on Burmese territory encroached upon China's border areas in Yunnan Province along several routes, the Laotian authorities allowed them to pass through Laotian territory. The commander of the Laotian troops stationed in Muong Xin also permitted the Chiang troops to use a special ferry on the Mekong River and invited the chief of the Chiang troops to work out military operations jointly...The Laotian authorities also handed over to the Chiang troops large quantities of ammunition which had been airdropped by US-Chiang Kai-shek planes on to [sic] Laotian territory in the first half of last year...Last December, the Laotian military authorities reached a secret agreement with the remnant Chiang troops permitting them to use Laos as a base for receiving supplies airdropped by the United States for the remnant troops of the Chiang Kai-shek clique, and for carrying out military provocations against China...At the same time, Laotian military aircraft have also undertaken active coordination with the remnants of the Chiang Kai-shek troops by intruding into China's territorial air on many occasions, to carry out low-altitude reconnaissance and disturbances. An incomplete count shows that nine groups of Laotian military aircraft have intruded into China's territorial air since last September. On Oct. 21, 1958, alone, three aircraft intruded into the Yiwu,

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*Neo Lao Hak Xat or the "Laotian Patriotic Front", organized in January 1956 as a political form including and more or less corresponding to the Pathet Lao Fighting Forces.

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Mengman, and Kiangcheng areas of China. On Jan. 16 and 23 of this year, Laotian military planes intruded into the Mengla area in China, carrying out low-altitude reconnaissance and disturbances...The Laotian authorities have also been colluding with the secret agents' organizations of the Chiang Kai-shek clique, permitting them to use the Muong Xin area in Laos to carry out espionage and sabotage activities against China. They have taken advantage of trade across the border to repeatedly send special agents into China to collect information, spread rumors, and instigate riots." *(A. M. Halpern and H. B. Fredman, Communist Strategy in Laos (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, RM-2561, 14 June 1960), pp. 37-38.)*

May-- A US State Department "Working Paper on the North Vietnamese Role in the War in South Vietnam", which is based upon information that is not drawn from sensitive sources but which is said to be further confirmed by such "sensitive intelligence", reports that by this month "at the latest" Hanoi in effect declared war on South Vietnam and committed its political and military apparatus in the South to the struggle. The North Vietnamese authorities formed border-crossing teams in early 1959 to transport medicines, ammunition, food, and documents across the DMZ. In May 1959, the 559th Transportation Group was organized to provide for the support of Viet Cong bases in the South. The 70th Battalion of the 559th was sent to the panhandle of Laos. Its responsibilities were to transport weapons, ammunition, mail, and supplies by way of 20 stations along the Laotian trails into South Vietnam. The battalion was also charged with guiding infiltrating groups, and with bringing the sick and wounded back to North Vietnam. In June 1959, the 603d Battalion was formed with a strength of 250 men, and was located near Quang Khe, a naval base in North Vietnam. It had the responsibility for clandestine maritime operations into South Vietnam. In January 1960, a special training base for infiltrators became operational at Son Tay, northwest of Hanoi. In Nghe An Province, the 324th Division was ordered to begin training infiltrators early in 1960. During this same period, the Xuan Mai Infiltration Training Center was set up southwest of Hanoi. It apparently was capable of handling several 1000-man classes at one time. *(Congressional Record, 9 May 1968, pp. H-3604-10.)*

11 May-- Mr. Walter S. Robertson, US Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, addresses the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the subject of Peking's foreign policy. He says that there is "an increasing arrogance in Peiping's outlook on the world." The first sign

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of the harsher line appeared in April 1958 when China launched a campaign of "all-out economic warfare against Japan." Shortly after this, it "urged overseas Chinese merchant communities, which are highly influential in the commercial life of Southeast Asia, to boycott Japanese goods. At the same time it flooded Southeast Asian markets with Red Chinese products at cutrate prices. This was done to gain foreign exchange, of course, but it was also done to drive Japan and other countries out of Southeast Asian markets and to penetrate the countries of the area politically with economic weapons." He sees the next step as being the drive against Taiwan launched in July. Robertson says that the US policy in the face of the Communist Chinese threat will continue to be: "(a) by maintaining an adequately strong U.S. military posture to deter, and if necessary, to counteract Communist aggression; (b) by continuing to help build up the military, political, and economic strength of the free Far East as rapidly as feasible; (c) by exerting such means (i.e., nonrecognition of Red China and opposing its seating in the U.N.) as are available to use to check the growth of Chinese Communist power and influence." In addition, he speaks at some length about the US policy toward Laos and the success of the US aid program. He points out that the Laotians have refused Chinese Communist and Russian aid, they have gotten rid of the two Communists in their Cabinet. They have a united country. They have gotten rid of corrupt officials. They have refused aid from the Chinese Communists and the Russians have refused to exchange diplomatic representatives with them. He says: "The Lao Government is now firmly oriented to the free world." *(86th Cong 1st Sess, Mutual Security Act of 1959, Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate (Washington, GPO, 1959), pt 1, pp. 355-57, 393-94.)*

15 May-- Pravda comments on the recent plenary session of the Central Committee of the DRV Working People's Party. That session "discussed questions of the struggle for the unification of Vietnam." The communique issued after the plenary session states that, "on the basis of the growing strength of North Vietnam and its steady development in all spheres, on the basis of the powerful development of the patriotic movement in the South, and with the help of the peace-loving peoples of the whole world, the Vietnamese people's struggle for national unification undoubtedly will be crowned with success." In spite of the Diem regime's campaign of repression, the "patriotic movement" in the South is growing in strength and intensity. The Soviets note that the plenary session appealed to "the whole Vietnamese people to unite

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and to wage a struggle for national unification on a basis of independence and democracy, to create a peaceful, united, independent, democratic, prosperous and strong Vietnam and to work toward maintaining peace in Southeast Asia and throughout the world." *("Vietnamese People Are Determined To Unite Homeland", trans. DES, Pravda, 15 May 1959, p. 6.)*

28 May-- Replying to the Sananikone Government's announcement of the danger of invasion, Peking's New China News Agency states that "...the Royal Laotian Government has officially announced that it would start a civil war again, according to an AFP report from Vientiane yesterday. The decision was taken at a special cabinet meeting of the Royal Laotian Government on the night of May 25. It was reported that at the meeting the Phoui Sananikone government decided to use force against the former Pathet Lao fighting units and 'deal with them as rebels'...The Sananikone government started armed persecution against the former Pathet Lao fighting units on May 11 and launched an attack on May 23 against the former Pathet Lao fighting units stationed on the Plain of Jars in Xieng Khouang Province, thus having actually started a civil war." *(A. M. Halpern and H. B. Fredman, Communist Strategy in Laos (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, RM-2561, 14 June 1960), p. 69.)*

30 May-July-- The July issue of the Soviet journal International Affairs takes note of the dangerous course of events unfolding in Laos. These events are said to threaten peace throughout the Indochinese peninsula and to constitute a danger to the security of all East Asia. The article charges that extensive military preparations have been underway for months in violation of the Geneva Agreements. Arms and munitions have been introduced into Laos by the US; the Sananikone regime has been increasingly encouraged to join SEATO; attempts are being made to form an anti-Communist military alliance with Thailand and South Vietnam. Moreover, it is claimed that Sananikone organized the recent frontier "incidents" for the purpose of providing an excuse to introduce SEATO "Mobile detachments" into the country. This situation presents "a serious threat to the security of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam, People's China, Cambodia and other countries." For its part, "the Soviet Government in a note to the British Government on May 30 declared that it fully shares the point of view of the Governments of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam and People's China regarding the threat to peace and security in Indochina arising from the actions of the Laotian Government. In

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the view of the Soviet Government, both chairmen of the Geneva Conference must take immediate action to secure the strict observance of the Geneva Agreements on Laos. Undoubtedly, both the Soviet Union and Britain bear a moral responsibility for the implementation of these international agreements." In addition, the Soviet Government "declared that it considers the reconvening of the International Control Commission for Laos to be one of the most effective means of promoting the implementation of the Geneva Agreements. On the basis of these considerations, the Soviet Government proposed that an appeal be sent to Laos on behalf of the two chairmen calling upon the Laotian Government to observe the Geneva Agreements and resume its cooperation with the International Control Commission in order that it can in the near future resume its work." *(A. Yermolayev, "Playing With Fire in Laos", International Affairs (Moscow), no. 7 (July 1959), pp. 63-66.)*

1 June-- The months of June and July saw relatively little action in Laos. The Neo Lao Hak Xat began to take on the role as primary spokesman for the Asian Communist position on Laos. On 1 June, the Hanoi directorate of the Pathet Lao issues a statement "strongly condemning the Phoui Sananikone government which, on order from the U.S. imperialists, has provoked civil war in Laos." The decision, taken 22 May, to outlaw the NLHX is declared an "open provocation of civil war". The people, it is said, "urge" the Government to: "Immediately end its actions of provoking a civil war in Laos, and immediately withdraw the Royal Army units which are encircling and attacking the Pathet Lao units. Immediately repeal the order holding under house arrest the leaders of the NLHX party. Release all Pathet Lao cadres now illegally concentrated and jailed in the various localities, and insure all democratic freedoms of the people. Respect the power of the parliament as provided for by the constitution of the kingdom. Strictly implement the agreements reached between the Royal Laotian Government and the Pathet Lao forces. Correctly implement the Geneva agreements and allow the International Commission in Laos to resume its activities." *(A. M. Halpern and H. B. Fredman, Communist Strategy in Laos (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, RM-2561, 14 June 1960), pp. 71-72.)*

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15 June-- The DRV adds its statement to that of the NLHX. Its charges are ten in number and represent violations which, taken as a whole, indicate an intimate relationship between events in Laos, the central issue of the Geneva Accords and the shift in the balance of power in Indochina. The "crimes" committed by the Sananikone regime are: "Repudiation of the Geneva agreements, forcing of the International Commission to discontinue its activities, carrying out of the U. S. policy of aggression, provocation of neighboring countries, repression of the people and taking of discriminatory and retaliatory measures against former Pathet Lao members, imposing on Laos of a dictatorial regime, wrecking the coalition government, violation of the intra-Laotian agreement on the reintegration of Phong Saly and Sam Neua provinces into the kingdom, violation of the agreements on the incorporation of Pathet Lao units into the Royal Army, and rekindling of civil war." *(A. M. Halpern and H. B. Fredman, Communist Strategy in Laos (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, RM-2561, 14 June 1960), p. 81.)*

17 June-- Hanoi's response to stepped-up Laotian-South Vietnamese cooperation is violent and indicative of the larger policy decisions that are being made. Nhan Dan recalls that the "Asian People's Anticommunist League", which recently held its annual session in Seoul, has decided to convene in the near future in an "anticommunist" conference bringing together Syngman Rhee, Chiang Kai-shek, Ngo Dinh Diem and the heads of the Philippine and Thai governments. It is also learned that Thai Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman is to meet Ngo Dinh Diem after his meeting with Phoui Sananikone in Laos. It is noteworthy that his visit to South Vietnam immediately follows the signing of a military agreement between Vu Van Mau, Diem's representative and the Sananikone government. [This is all] obviously directed toward the realization of the US aggressive scheme in Southeast Asia. The paper also recalls that at the end of 1953, US Vice President Nixon stressed before the US National Security Council the necessity of building a "defense" ring in the Pacific, including South Korea, Indochina, Taiwan, Japan, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand. In this military plan against the DPRK, Peoples China, and DRV and the peaceful and neutral countries of Southeast Asia, the United States is said to be using Thailand and the Philippines to extend SEATO's activities and is maneuvering to bring South Vietnam and Laos into this bloc. *(Foreign Broadcasts Information Service, Daily Report, 17 June 1959, p. EEE 1.)*

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7 July-- A statement attributed to the Second Pathet Lao Battalion (the forces then operating in Northeast Laos against the Royal Government) is published in the Pathet Lao official organ in Hanoi. This belligerent declaration sets the terms under which the conflict would end: the surrender of the Sananikone Government and its replacement by the Neo Lao Hak Xat in a coalition that includes full representation of the national minorities. The Pathet Lao conditions clearly indicate that the forces currently holding power in Vientiane would be, at best, a minority in the proposed coalition. Halpern and Fredman note that in July 1959 "no free election, held in Laos under conditions possible at the time, would have given the NLHX anything close to the large majority that its program required; but a coalition of minority peoples, brought in close conjunction with the NLHX, especially if this coalition came to power under NLHX leadership at the end of a successful rebellion, guaranteed the preconditions under which Laos would become an adjunct to the DRV in perfect accordance with the Geneva and Vientiane agreements." The definitive statement of the conditions that would have to be met for the rebellion to end is as follows:

"1. Strictly and correctly implement the Geneva agreements, agree to the resumption of the activities of the International Commission, strictly and correctly carry out the Vientiane agreements concluded between the Royal Government and the Pathet Lao forces, and end the civil war immediately.

2. Correctly carry out the policy of peace and neutrality, defend national independence and sovereignty, establish relations with all countries—especially with neighboring countries—on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence, and renounce the line of serving U.S. imperialism as a tool for preparing war, which creates tension with neighboring countries.

3. Set up a coalition government including the representative of the Neo Lao Hak Xat party and other progressive political parties and various nationalities.

4. Guarantee for the people all democratic freedoms, and respect the powers of the National Assembly and the constitution now in force.

5. End immediately the policy of persecution and repression; respect the freedom of activity of the Neo Lao

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Hak Xat party, the peace and neutrality committee and other progressive political organizations; end at once the discrimination against the former Pathet Lao and other resistance members; release all Pathet Lao cadres and former resistance members now under illegal detention; and restore freedom to Prince Souphanouvong and other Neo Lao Hak Xat party leaders.

6. Respect the administrative regulations of Sam Neua and Phong Saly provinces; withdraw without delay the men of the pro-U.S. clique who have been illegally appointed to take over a number of posts there and who are persecuting and repressing the local population; appoint in their places the former Pathet Lao functionaries as stipulated by the agreements reached between the two sides, and end all acts of discrimination against the former Pathet Lao functionaries now working in various royal administrative organs.

7. Adopt a policy of economic independence, reduce taxes and improve the people's living conditions, abolish the pro-U.S. elements and trade monopolies, and accept economic aid offered unconditionally by any country.

8. Develop national culture; respect Buddhism; preserve sound national customs and habits; and ban all kinds of pornographic literature and recreation."

This statement was published simultaneously by Peking and Hanoi. Particularly interesting is its conclusion that "the struggle to achieve these objectives would be a protracted and arduous one." *(A. M. Halpern and H. B. Fredman, Communist Strategy in Laos (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, RM-2561, 14 June 1960), pp. 75-78.)*

10 July-- Writing for the Belgian Communist publication Red Flag, Ho Chi Minh notes that "[w]e are building socialism in Viet-Nam, but we are building it in only one part of the country, while in the other part we still have to direct and bring to a close the middle-class democratic and anti-imperialist revolution." *(Department of State Publication 7308, A Threat to the Peace, Part II (Washington: GPO, 1961), p. 3.)*

18 July-- General Giap, in an interview with the weekly Thong Nhat, gives an authoritative summary of the DRV's position on the legal and political value of the Geneva Agreements. He states that they have restored peace in Indochina and made it possible for the DRV to become "stronger and stronger as a steady bulwark for the nationwide movement for

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liberation." In answer to a question concerning their further usefulness, he replies: "Have the Geneva agreements lost their effectiveness under such conditions? No, they will retain great value. The Geneva agreements recognized Vietnam's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity. They upheld before world public opinion the just character of our people's struggle for peace, unity, independence, and democracy. These agreements greatly promoted the national liberation movement of our people. The more the U.S. imperialists [and the South Vietnam regime] violate the Geneva agreements, the more clearly they will expose themselves as lawless, reactionary and bellicose, and the more they will be isolated. It is precisely their violations of the Geneva agreements which are leading them to annihilation." In summing up their value, he notes that the Agreements "constitute a basis founded in international law." *(A. M. Halpern and H. B. Fredman, Communist Strategy in Laos (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, RM-2561, 14 June 1960), pp. 90-91.)*

1 August-- The Soviet journal New Times notes that Sananikone's predecessor, Souvanna Phouma, "had done much to implement the 1954 Geneva agreements. The Phouma government scrupulously followed a policy of neutrality and refused to bring Laos into the U.S. sphere of influence. It held by-elections, which gave the Patriotic Party nine seats in parliament. The Patriotic Party is the successor to the Pathet Lao resistance movement, and its representatives, including its leader, Prince Souphannouvong, were given ministerial posts." This situation changed drastically, however, when Sananikone became Prime Minister "as a result of Washington intrigue". In short time, the new Prime Minister began to bring Laos under the sway of SEATO, allowing the Pentagon to train and equip the Royal Laotian Army, thus bringing it under American control. "Along with this, Sananikone launched a repressive campaign against the patriotic and democratic movement. Parliament was dissolved and Pathet Lao denied representation in the government. Prince Souphannouvong, the Laotian national hero, and many other Pathet Lao leaders were imprisoned. The next step was to try to disarm the Pathet Lao forces, though under the Geneva agreements they were to be integrated in the national army. Knowing full well that disarmament would be followed by terror, the Pathet Lao fighters took to the hills. Sananikone decided to crush them, and thereby unleashed civil war." *(Y. Zvyagin, "Washington and Laos", New Times, no. 34 (August 1959), pp. 17-18.)*

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4-17 August-- The Laotian Government proclaims a state of emergency in its five northern provinces because of fighting with Communist rebels. On 8 August, Premier Sananikone states that the guerrillas are attempting to form "a base from which to attack the south and a corridor through which to attack South Vietnam." He warns the Chinese Communists on 14 August that "they were wrong if they think that Laos can be intimidated." On 17 August, the Soviet Union charges that Laos "despite its obligation under the Geneva Agreement, has concluded a treaty legalizing the presence of United States military personnel in Laos and handing over control of the Laotian army" to the United States. The Chinese Communist Foreign Ministry charges that the fighting in Laos is "engineered from first to last by the United States." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 93.)*

12 August-- A "spokesman for the CPR Ministry of Foreign Affairs" addresses the tense situation in Laos. He holds that, in order to eliminate this danger, "engineered from the start by the United States, all measures of the United States and the Sananikone government against the Geneva and Vientiane agreements must stop, all American military personnel and arms and ammunition must be withdrawn, all U.S. military bases must be abolished, the normal control and supervisory functions of the International Commission must be resumed, and the Geneva and the Vientiane agreements must be thoroughly implemented." Furthermore, the "spokesman" rejects the forthcoming attempt by Sananikone to take the Laotian problem before the United Nations since the only question of relevance is the faithful implementation of the Geneva and Vientiane agreements and that issue, it is argued, concerns only the two parties directly involved in the Vientiane agreement plus those countries participating in the Geneva Accords. *(A. M. Halpern and H. B. Fredman, Communist Strategy in Laos (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, RM-2561, 14 June 1960), pp. 90-91.)*

17 August-- The Soviet Foreign Ministry claims that the Royal Lao Government has violated the Geneva Agreements by evading obligation for control by the ICC over the importation of armaments and the introduction of foreign military personnel and has violated the spirit of the Vientiane Agreements of 1956-57 by obstructing the participation of the Pathet Lao in the national government and by delaying the integration of Pathet Lao forces into the national army. The statement further charges that the Lao

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Government has "flooded the country with U.S. servicemen" and that under their direction "various war preparations have been stepped up on Laotian territory, such as building airfields and landing strips." *(US Department of State, American Foreign Policy, Current Documents, 1959 (Washington: GPO, 1963), p. 1225.)*

25 August-- President Eisenhower tells a news conference that the Laotian Government has asked for US aid "to reinforce their police forces, and the units they keep for internal order, and we have got it under study as a matter of urgency." This same day, the North Vietnamese Foreign Ministry warns that if US "imperialists" continue "their military interference in Laos" both the United States and Laos will suffer "bitter failure". *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 93.)*

8 September-3 November-- On 8 September, the United Nations Security Council adopts a resolution sending a subcommittee of representatives from Argentina, Tunesia, Italy and Japan to Laos for the purpose of investigating charges filed by the Laotian Government that North Vietnamese troops have been crossing the frontier and engaging in attacks against Royal Lao Army units in the border areas of Sam Neua province. On 3 November, this subcommittee reports that evidence presented to it by the Royal Laotian Government indicates that military activity in Laos has been undertaken by Pathet Lao and regular army units of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam). The subcommittee was unable to secure testimony from the Pathet Lao and DRVN. *(Paul E. Zinner, ed., Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1959 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1960), pp. 454-56.)*

10 September-- The Laotian rebels say they are willing to "hold talks and consultations" with the Laotian Government and list conditions. This same day the Laotian Government asserts that North Vietnamese troops have swept across the border into Laos. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 94.)*

14 September-- In a statement issued by Tass, the Soviet Union proposes that a conference to be attended by the countries which took part in the 1954 Geneva Conference on Indochina should be convened without delay to consider the situation that has arisen in Laos. The Soviets further propose that the Western Powers should instruct the International

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Commission on Laos to resume its activity without delay and in cooperation with the Government of Laos work out measures designed to normalize the situation in that country. They state that the UN Security Council action to send observers to Laos constitutes an undermining of the Geneva Agreements. The following day, the United States rejects these proposals on the grounds that reconvening the ICC would constitute an infrigement on Laotian sovereignty and a second meeting of the Geneva Conference would be disruptive to the actions undertaken by the Security Council. *(US Department of State, American Foreign Policy, Current Documents, 1959 (Washington: GPO, 1963), pp. 1236-37.)*

late September-- The Soviet foreign affairs journal New Times supports the Soviet Government proposal of 14 September for an immediate meeting of the members of the Geneva Conference to consider the situation in Laos. It objects to the United Nations Security Council's action in sending a fact-finding subcommittee to Laos as a "gross violation of the U.N. Charter...for a resolution passed against the vote of one of the permanent members, in this case the Soviet Union, is devoid of all validity." The article notes that the Western powers dodged the Soviet veto by proclaiming the vote a "procedural" one and as such not subject to the unanimity rule. "But", the author asks, "who is seriously going to believe that so grave an issue as an investigation of the position in a country plunged in civil war can be brought under the head of 'procedure'? It was illegitimate to raise it in the Security Council at all, for under the Charter the U.N. in general has no right to interfere in internal conflicts." *(Y. Bochkaryov, "The Plot Against the People of Laos", New Times, no. 38 (September 1959), pp. 11-12.)*

October-- The Soviet foreign affairs journal International Affairs accuses the UN subcommittee in Laos of fabricating evidence which can be "used as a basis for undisguised armed intervention in the internal affairs of Laos on the excuse of the need to 'repel aggression.'" If this were not the case, it is claimed, the Security Council would not have ignored the Geneva Accords and the International Control Commission in its recommendations. The article accuses the Sananikone Government of using police terror against the former Pathet Lao resistance fighters: "In order to counter the terrorist raids of the Government's armed gangs, the population in many provinces has formed guerrilla detachments for self-defence; these detachments protect the life and property

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of the population." *(A. Yermolayev, "A Dirty Gamble", International Affairs (Moscow), no. 10 (October 1959), pp. 108-10.)*

December-- At the end of an article on North Vietnamese agriculture and collectivization in the authorative international journal World Marxist Review, Pham Van Dong says that "[t]here can be no doubt that the achievements of the North are exerting a growing influence on the peasants in the South, where the peasantry is the main strength of the revolutionary patriotic movement. This movement will grow stronger and will inevitably be victorious." As to the future course of action, "[t]he working people of Vietnam and their Party—the Workers' Party—are confronted with the task of accomplishing the transition to socialism in the North and at the same time of carrying forward the national people's democratic revolution in the southern part of the country. The aims of this revolution are: consolidation of the national unity of the people, unification of the country on the basis of independence and democracy, completion of democratic transformations throughout Vietnam and speeding up the North's advance to socialism, the establishment of a united and independent, prosperous and democratic state." *(Pham Van Dong, "Road of the Vietnamese Peasants in the Revolution", World Marxist Review, II, no. 12 (December 1959), p. 34.)*

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January-- In an article in the Lao Dong Party journal Hoc Tap Vo Nguyen Giap states that "[t]he North has become a large rear echelon of our army...The North is the revolutionary base for the whole country." *(Department of State Publication 7308, A Threat to the Peace, Part II (Washington: GPO, 1961), p. 4.)*

1 January-- The DRV Constitution of 1960 is promulgated. Included in its long Preamble is the standard Hanoi analysis of the "big successes" in reconstruction of the North and the "heroic" struggle of "our southern compatriots". Little new is added, although it is repeatedly emphasized that the struggle for reunification is a peaceful one. *("Text of the North Vietnamese Constitution of 1960", in Appendix I, Bernard Fall, The Two Vietnams (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), relevant portions on pp. 418-20.)*

5 January-- In a eulogy celebrating the 13th anniversary of the founding of the Working People's Party, Ho Chi Minh stresses the vital role of the Party in the building of socialism

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and the reunification of the country. The immediate task of the Party is to "build socialism in the North in order to serve as a firm base for the struggle for national reunification..." It is emphasized that the southern compatriots are struggling for "improved living conditions, democratic freedoms, and peaceful national reunification and have constantly turned their mind toward the North." In reply to them, Ho sends his "affectionate greetings" and tells them that "our just struggle, though protracted and hard, will certainly win..." *("Speech Opening the Ceremony Commemorating the Thirteenth Anniversary of the Foundation of the Party", in Bernard Fall, Ho Chi Minh on Revolution (New York: New American Library, 1967), pp. 306, 308-09.)*

March-- A Declaration of Former Resistance Fighters on the Present Situation in South Vietnam is issued. This statement purports to represent the opinion of former Vietminh leaders and members (both Communist and non-Communist), representatives of the Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, Buddhist and Catholic communities, the Communist or Workers' Party, the Vietnamese Socialists and other social and political groups "comprising...the vast majority of the Vietnamese people..." It appeals to "all classes, all social strata, all milieu" to intensify the struggle to oblige the South Vietnamese authorities to put an end to "bloody 'sweeping' operations, abolish the fascist 10/59 law, annul the death sentences pronounced for patriots, liberate those in prison without valid cause..." and stop repression of labor unions, intellectuals, journalists, religious sects, ethnic minorities and other groups. Security in the countryside must be reestablished. The country must be freed from US economic and military dominance. The Manila Pact (SEATO) and the new "friendly economic alliance" are acts of camouflaged aggression and must be rejected. The South Vietnamese authorities must "[u]ndertake realistic measures to consult with the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam for holding general elections for unification, and, first of all, to establish normal relations between the people of the two zones in postal, economic, cultural and travel matters, etc." The Former Resistance Fighters state that their struggle against the "colonial" and "Fascist" Diem regime is for the purpose of forming a "National Democratic Union government in South Vietnam, composed of representatives of diverse political opinions and all social classes, accomplishing national independence and the democratic liberties guaranteeing a decent life for the people,

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respecting and integrally and rigorously applying the Geneva Accords, entering conferences with North Vietnam for the peaceful reunification of the country. This government would pursue a foreign policy of peace and friendship based on the principles of the Bandung conference." *("Declaration of Former Resistance Fighters on the Present Situation in South Vietnam", in George M. Kahin and John W. Lewis, The United States In Vietnam (New York: Dial Press, 1967), pp. 384-87.)*

5 March-- In a note to the co-chairmen of the Geneva Conference, DRV Premier Pham Van Dong protests against the "present grave situation in Laos." That country had been without a civilian government since New Year's Day when Premier Phoui Sananikone had resigned. At that time, the Laotian Army had taken power under the leadership of rightist General Phoumi Nosavan and the leaders of the conservative reform group known as the Committee for the Defense of the National Interests. This new group had appealed to the United Nations for assistance against an invasion from North Vietnam or Communist China. Phoumi Nosavan had announced that the military would take over the Prime Minister's office until the crisis was resolved. Commenting on this situation, Pham Van Dong says that the US "imperialists" are "carrying on their scheme of making Laos a United States military base" to threaten the security of North Vietnam and peace in Indochina and Southeast Asia. His note states that the US is "continuing to introduce into Laos large quantities of arms and ammunition and large numbers of military advisors and other military personnel and to strengthen the equipment and training of the Laotian armed forces." *(New York Times, 6 March 1960, p. 22.)*

17 April-- North Vietnam protests to Great Britain and the Soviet Union, co-chairmen of the Geneva Conference, against a "formidable" increase of personnel in the US MAAG in South Vietnam. *(Marcus G. Raskin and Bernard B. Fall, eds., The Viet-Nam Reader (New York: Random House, 1965), p. 382.)*

22 April-- In a letter from the commanding officer of Company 265 of the "Army of Liberation of the South" addressed to officers and men of the Army of the Republic of Viet-Nam at Truc Giang in Kien Hoa Province, the revolution in the South is stated to be under the leadership of the Lao Dong Party. Its goals are "to annihilate imperialism and feudalism, to give land to the tillers, and to lay the foundation for the building of socialism and communism..."

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(Department of State Publication 7308, A Threat to the Peace, Part II (Washington: GPO, 1961), pp. 87-89.)

26 April-- Elections for the 59-seat Laotian National Assembly result in a crushing defeat for the Pathet Lao and other left-wing candidates. So one-sided is the balloting, even in areas in which the Communists are known to be strong, that charges of "falsified election" are immediately raised by both Communist and non-Communist candidates. *(New York Times, 27 April 1960, p. 6.)*

5 May-- The United States announces that at the request of the GVN the US MAAG will be increased from 327 to 685 members by the end of the year. *(Marcus G. Raskin and Bernard B. Fall, eds., The Viet-Nam Reader (New York: Random House, 1965), p. 383.)*

8 May-- At the conclusion of a 4-day state visit to Cambodia Chou En-lai and Cambodian Premier Pho Proeung sign a communique agreeing to increase economic and cultural relations between the two countries. The communique says that Chou stressed that the two states strongly condemn the aims of neighboring countries to expand by force of arms. It is believed that this was an allusion to Cambodia's territorial dispute with South Vietnam. *(New York Times, 9 May 1960, p. 2.)*

14 May-- A joint CPR-DRV communique is issued following Chou En-lai's visit to North Vietnam. Chou and DRV Prime Minister Pham Van Dong announce that a "full unity of views" was reached. They praise the efforts of the Soviet Union to ease international tensions, express the hope that the Paris summit will be fruitful, condemn the "provocation by the American militarists" [i.e. the U-2 incident] and support the "firm position" taken by the USSR with regard to that action. The two heads of government state that the Chinese proposal of a peace pact between the countries of the Asian and Pacific region to establish an atom-free zone is an "initiative fully favorable to peace and tranquility in Asia and throughout the world." With regard to Vietnam, the communique expresses the opinion that the two co-chairmen and the countries taking part on the International Control Commission must fulfill their duty to ensure the full application of the Geneva Agreements. *("Complete Unity of Views", trans. DES, Pravda, 15 May 1960, p. 5.)*

24 May-- Pathet Lao leader Prince Souphanouvong and 15 of his followers escape from jail where they had been awaiting

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trial for high treason. The Prince had been confined to prison since the Pathet Lao rebellion began the previous year. Subsequently, on 4 September the Special Criminal Court of Justice in Vientiane dropped the charges against Souphanouvong and his associates for lack of evidence. *(New York Times, 25 May and 5 September 1960, pp. 18 and 2 respectively.)*

5 June-- In a letter from the commanding officer of Company 265 of the "Army of Liberation of the South" to the officers and men of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam at Truc Giang in Kien Hoa Province, it is stated that "[i]n the past, the Vietnamese Communists have led the Vietnamese people in the victorious fight against the French colonialists and the feudalistic Bao Dai clique. Now and in the future, the Vietnamese Communists are leading and will lead the Vietnamese people in the struggle against the American imperialists and the feudal Diem clique..." *(Department of State Publication 7308, A Threat to the Peace (Washington: GPO, 1961), pp. 87-88.)*

11 June-- "Observer", a pseudonym for a high-ranking Soviet official, comments on the tenth report of the International Supervisory and Control Commission. He notes that the Commission expressed "serious concern" over the repeated violations of the DMZ by South Vietnamese military units. He objects that through the fault of the South Vietnamese authorities the recommendations made by the International Commission on the question of improving the administration of the temporary demarcation line and the demilitarized zone have not been carried out. Moreover, the Diem regime is "attempting under various pretexts to evade the legitimate demands of the International Commission for the exercise of control over the airfields of South Vietnam." This is being done, it is stated, in order to escape responsibility for violating the Geneva cease-fire agreement which forbade the importation of foreign arms and military personnel into Vietnam. *("Observer", South Vietnam Is Zone of Provocation--Tenth Report of International Commission on Vietnam", trans. DES, Izvestia, 11 June 1960, p. 3.)*

19 July-- On the eve of the 6th anniversary of the signing of the Geneva Agreements, Chinese Communist Party Central Committee member Liu Ning-I issues a strong statement in support of the DRV position on reunification. He blasts the "criminal activities" of the US in South Vietnam and states that this demonstrates once again "that imperialism is unwilling to abide by international agreements

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favorable to peace, but is bent on wrecking them by every means." The "U.S.-Ngo Dien Diem clique is being encircled by the Vietnamese people; its days are numbered..." As to Chinese support for the struggle, Liu states that "[t]he victories of the Vietnamese people are victories for the Chinese people. The struggle of the Vietnamese people against U.S. imperialist aggression and for the peaceful reunification of their motherland will always have the all-out support of the 650 million Chinese people." The United States must abide by the Geneva Accords. With the "powerful support" of the socialist camp, "headed by the Soviet Union", Vietnam will surely be "reunified eventually." *(Liu Ning-I, "Firm Support for the Vietnamese People", Peking Review, III, no. 30 (26 July 1960), pp. 11-12.)*

9 August-1 October-- A coup by paratroop commander Captain Kong Le on 9 August places the administrative capital of Laos, Vientiane, under rebel control. In the midst of a highly confusing situation, the rebels demand amnesty from the Government and the appointment of neutralist Prince Souvanna Phouma as Premier. Kong Le also demands the adoption of neutralism and the attainment of peace with the Pathet Lao as conditions for ending the revolt. Other conditions are: the departure of foreign military personnel and a clean-up of Government corruption. A neutralist policy, as defined by the rebels, would mean friendly relations with both Communist and non-Communist countries and acceptance of non-military aid from any country if it is given without political strings. In reaction to the Kong Le coup, a counter-coup under the rightist leadership of Prince Boun Oum and General Phoumi Nosavan is undertaken. In this highly uncertain situation, King Savang Vathana on 14 September moves to restore order. He charges the Souvanna Phouma Government, just chosen by the National Assembly, with this task. With the cooperation of the Pathet Lao forces, the Government deals the troops loyal to Phoumi Nosavan a major defeat at Paksane. In this weakened position, the rightist leaders agree to negotiate with Souvanna Phouma. On 1 October, the Neo Lao Hak Xat announces that it is ready to join in the discussions. The Party's statement lays down certain "fundamental" conditions that it declares are necessary to ensure the success of the negotiations. It is said that the Government must "decidedly not" make any concessions to the anti-Communist group of Phoumi Nosavan. It should set up a coalition Government including representatives of the Neo Lao Hak Xat Party to establish diplomatic and economic relations (including aid)

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with the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China and North Vietnam. All attempts to "drag SEATO aggressive bloc and the United Nations Organization" into interfering with Laotian internal affairs must be opposed. *(New York Times, 2 October 1960, p. 3.)*

5-10 September-- The Third Congress of the Lao Dong (Workers') Party convenes in Hanoi in the presence of representatives of the Communist parties of the Soviet Union, China, all other socialist countries, and France, India, Indonesia, Japan, Canada, Italy, and Morocco. The 500,000 members (the official figure) of the Lao Dong Party are represented at this Congress by 576 delegates and candidate-delegates. Jean Lacouture, writing several years later, observes in retrospect that "[d]espite the climate of the Congress, which was marked by the very favorable reception of the Soviet delegation and the relatively cool reception accorded to the Peking representatives...its labors had two principal results: the promotion of Le Duan to the post of secretary-general [First Secretary] of the Party, and the emphasis that was placed on the reunification with the South. It was quickly realized, in addition, that the two results were closely interconnected." The new First Secretary is described as "in effect an old fighter from the South." His promotion thus may be viewed as being a symbol of the policy of reunification. Lacouture suggests that "[t]he most important, though tacit, result of the Third Congress was the approval given by the strategists of the North to the creation in the South of a revolutionary organization that was openly to take the lead in the subversion of the Diem regime." *(Jean Lacouture, Vietnam: Between Two Truces (New York: Random House, 1966), pp. 49-50.)*

5 September-- In a major speech opening the 3rd National Congress of the Lao Dong Party, Ho Chi Minh states that "[t]he present task of the Vietnamese revolution is to lead the North forward to socialism and to struggle for national reunification by peaceful means, to complete the national people's democratic revolution throughout the country..." He argues that a "prosperous and strong North is the firm base of the struggle for national reunification" and observes that "[t]his Congress will shed new light on our people's path of revolutionary struggle leading to peaceful national reunification." In this struggle, he notes, solidarity between the forces of the socialist countries and the complete unity of the Communist and Workers' Parties of all countries is of the utmost importance. We are confident that "the Communist and Workers' Parties will continue to strengthen the cohesion of the

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countries of the world socialist system and will preserve, like the apple of the eye, unity in the struggle for peace and the security of all peoples for the triumph of the great cause of Marxism-Leninism (Bucharest communiqué)."* *("Speech Opening the Third National Congress of the Viet-Nam Workers' Party", in Bernard Fall, Ho Chi Minh on Revolution (New York: New American Library, 1967), pp. 314-18.)*

5 September-- Lao Dong First Secretary Le Duan presents the political report of the Party Central Committee to the 3rd National Congress. He states that "[t]he socialist revolution is carried out in the North while in the South we have to make every effort to achieve a broad national unity embracing all national and democratic forces, all forces opposed to the U.S. imperialists and Ngo Dinh Diem. In building and consolidating the North, we must on the one hand keep firmly to the line of socialist construction and, on the other, pay the greatest attention to the situation in the South, help create further conditions for the rallying of all patriotic forces opposed to the U.S.-Diem regime in the South into a broad national united front with the worker-peasant alliance as its basis, and insure the victory of the revolutionary struggle in the South. Our guiding principle in carrying out the socialist revolution in the North is: consolidate the North, and in so doing, take the South into due consideration..." The North is described as the "common revolutionary base of the whole country. Its constant strengthening not only heightens the confidence and stimulates the revolutionary enthusiasm of our patriotic countrymen in the South but also helps the balance of forces between revolution and counter-revolution on a national scale to tip over to the side of revolution, creating favorable conditions for the powerful development and final victory of the revolution in the South." *(Department of State Publication 7308, A Threat to the Peace, II (Washington: GPO, 1961), pp. 4-5.)*

6 September-- Chou En-lai, at a reception celebrating the 15th anniversary of the founding of the DRV, notes that the "peaceful reunification" of Vietnam is "an indispensable

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*The 3rd Congress of the Communist Party of Rumania, which had opened on 20 June, provided the setting for the first great public clash between Soviets and Chinese. Khrushchev openly attacked the Chinese, and Peking reciprocated in kind. In view of these events, Ho's statement of "confidence" in Communist unity may be read as more of a plea than as an article of faith.

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factor in safeguarding peace in Indo-China and Asia." The Chinese "people" have been giving and will continue to give "firm support" to the Vietnamese people in their struggle. The Chinese "people and Government" have "always been concerned about peace in Indo-China and wish to see this region bordering on China become a peace area." Towards this end, the Chinese Government has always observed the Geneva Agreements, supported the peaceful reunification of Vietnam, backed the neutral policy of Cambodia and expressed a willingness to establish friendly relations with Laos. Moreover, the People's Republic has signed "treaties of friendship and mutual nonaggression or of peace and friendship successively with the Kingdom of the Yemen, the Union of Burma, the Kingdom of Nepal and the Kingdom of Afghanistan. The signing of these treaties is not only in the interests of both contracting parties, but also in that of enlarging the peace area and curbing imperialist aggression and expansion." *("Chou En-lai's Speech at Vietnamese Reception", Peking Review, III, no. 36 (6 September 1960), pp. 7-8.)*

10 September-- At the 3rd National Congress of the Lao Dong Party a resolution (much of which is taken verbatim from the opening day political report presented by Le Duan) is adopted concerning the "tasks and line of the Party in the new stage." Key sections concern the struggle in the South:

"The revolution in the South is a protracted, hard and complex process of struggle, combining many forms of struggle of great liveliness and flexibility, ranging from lower to higher, and taking as its basis the building, consolidation and development of the revolutionary power of the masses. During this process we must pay special attention to the work of organizing and educating the people, first and foremost the workers, peasants and intellectuals, promoting to the highest degree the patriotism of the various strata of our people. We must unceasingly expose the perfidious schemes and acts of the U.S. imperialists and their henchmen, in order to divide and isolate them as much as possible."

"To ensure the complete success of the revolutionary struggle in south Viet Nam, our people there must strive to establish a united bloc of workers, peasants and soldiers, and to bring into being a broad National United Front directed against the U.S. and Diem and based on the worker-peasant alliance. This Front must rally all the patriotic classes and sections of the people, the majority and minority nationalities, all patriotic parties and religious groupings, together with all individuals inclined to oppose the U.S. and Diem. The aims of its struggle are peace, national independence, democratic freedoms, improvement of

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the people's living conditions and peaceful national reunification. The Front must rally all forces that can be rallied, win over all forces that can be won over, neutralize all forces that should be neutralized and draw the broad masses into the general struggle against the U.S. and Diem for the liberation of the South and the peaceful reunification of the Fatherland..."

"The revolutionary movement in the South plays a very important role in relation to the reunification of the country. Simultaneously with the effort to build the North and take it towards socialism, our people must strive to maintain and develop the revolutionary forces in the South and create favourable conditions for peaceful national reunification."

"...Our Government and people are resolutely maintaining their line of peaceful national reunification and preserving the Geneva Agreements. We stand for the achievement of national reunification step by step in accordance with the spirit of the Programme of the Viet Nam Fatherland Front. But we must constantly heighten our vigilance and be prepared for any eventuality. If the American imperialists and their henchmen venture to unleash war in an attempt to invade the North, the whole of our people will resolutely stand up to defeat them and achieve independence and national reunification." *("Resolution of the Third National Congress of the Vietnam Workers' Party on the Tasks and Line of the Party in the New Stage", Third National Congress of the Viet Nam Workers' Party Documents (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1960), vol. I; excerpts reprinted in George M. Kahin and John W. Lewis, The United States in Vietnam (New York: Dial Press, 1967), pp. 388-89. For a more thorough reproduction, see Department of State Publication 7308, A Threat to the Peace, II (Washington: GPO, 1961), pp. 1-3.)*

12 September-- General Vo Nguyen Giap states in a speech that "[t]he August general uprisings [in 1945 against the French] are a model of successful uprisings in a colonial and semifeudal country and a model of a clever association between political and armed struggles and between the political forces of the masses and the revolutionary armed forces." These successes, it is said, "gave us this lesson: to be successful, the armed struggle and the building of armed forces must be guided by correct political lines and the armed struggle must serve the objectives of the political struggle. Indeed, during the whole process of its leadership over the armed struggle, our party kept a firm hold on the national democratic revolutionary line and correctly associated the anti-imperialist responsibility with the antifeudal responsibility, thus achieving brilliant successes." In short, if the struggle is to be successful, Giap implies, the revolutionaries must associate themselves favorably with the issues that are of primary concern to the

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masses, i.e. the "anti-feudal responsibility" —such policies as the reduction of land rents and the implementation of agrarian reform. *(Department of State Publication 7308, A Threat to the Peace, II (Washington: GPO, 1961), pp. 3-4.)*

15 October-- The Soviet newspaper Pravda accuses the United States of planning to intervene in Laos to crush the neutralist regime of Premier Souvanna Phouma. It compares this "act of piracy" to that of US actions in the Congo and accuses SEATO and the United States of inspiring talk "about the necessity of employing the United Nations for 'internationalization' of the crisis in Laos." Pravda further accuses J. Graham Parsons, US Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, of trying to "blackmail" the Premier to break off negotiations with the Pathet Lao. The Soviets, who had established diplomatic relations with the Laotian regime the previous week, call for support of Souvanna and state that the "legal Government of Laos has worked out a positive program which foresees insuring national unity by pursuing a policy of real neutrality and the development of friendly relations with all states." *(New York Times, 16 October 1960, p. 4.)*

12 November-- The previous day several units of paratroopers had unsuccessfully rebelled against the Diem regime. North Vietnam's Vietnam News Agency reports that the coup failed "because it did not rely on the people." It says that the revolt leaders used an "anti-Communist, pro-United States slogan." *(New York Times, 13 November 1960, p. 13.)*

December-- In a raid on a Viet Cong headquarters in Dinh Tuong Province, the armed forces of the Republic of Vietnam seize many documents. Included is the notebook of a VC commissioner. This manuscript discusses the use of violence to acquire power:

"Whether we should resort to the use of arms or not depends on the actual situation at the moment. This should not occur too early or too late, and it is only up to the Central Committee to determine when the time is appropriate and reach a decision.

The revolution in the South at the present time has two possibilities:

—general uprising to seize power.
—a long-term armed struggle.

But our final objective is a general uprising to seize power.

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The Revolution in the South should go through two stages until the General Uprising:

—the preparatory stage, to upset the balance of power.
—the stage of direct revolution.

When the balance of power has completely changed in our favor and when the time is proper for a general uprising, military means will be the essential means and arming the population and our forces will be our primary task.

When should the general uprising take place?

During the preparatory stage, in order to change the balance of power in our favor, we must exert our influence on the people in rural areas and in cities and organize the masses under the strict leadership of the Party." *(Department of State Publication 7308, A Threat to the Peace (Washington: GPO, 1961), p. 93.)*

3 December-- Following a visit to Moscow by Cambodian Chief of State Norodom Sihanouk, a joint Soviet-Cambodian communique refers to "the serious aggravation of the situation in Laos" and says that it is "desirable to render aid" to the neutralist Government of Souvanna Phouma. Soviet promises of further aid to Cambodia are also reported. This will include a "technical school" to be built by the Russians, credit and technical assistance for building hydro-electric power stations and specialists to prospect for Cambodian minerals. In addition, Soviet Premier Khrushchev agrees to visit Cambodia at a date that "will be fixed later". *(New York Times, 4 December 1960, p. 12.)*

6 December-- In November, the Moscow Conference of Communist and Worker's parties met to celebrate the forty-third anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution. Eight-one parties attended. The "Statement" of the Conference issued at the close of the meeting, while deliberately designed to be vague enough to obscure Sino-Soviet differences, devotes a full section to the topic of the "national liberation movement": "National-liberation revolutions have triumphed in vast areas of the world...A new historical period has set in in the life of mankind: the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America that have won their freedom have begun to take an active part in world politics...The complete collapse of colonialism is imminent. The breakdown

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of the system of colonial slavery under the impact of the national-liberation movement is a development ranking second in historic importance only to the formation of the world socialist system...The forces of world socialism contributed decisively to the struggle of the colonial and dependent peoples for liberation from imperialist oppression. The socialist system has become a reliable shield for the independent national development of the peoples who have won freedom. The national-liberation movement receives powerful support from the international working-class movement...The Communist parties are working actively for a consistent completion of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, democratic revolution, for the establishment of national democracies, for a radical improvement in the living standard of the people...All the socialist countries and the international working-class and Communist movement recognize their duty to render the fullest moral and material assistance to the peoples fighting to free themselves from imperialist and colonial tyranny." In another section of the "Statement", the defense of the socialist camp against the "imperialist" threat is discussed. It is stated that the "combined forces of the socialist camp reliably safeguard every socialist country against encroachments by imperialist reaction." *(Text may be found in David Floyd, Mao Against Khrushchev (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), pp. 296-307.)*

10-12 December-- On 10 December, a High Committee of the Armed Forces of Laos assumes control of Vientiane. Premier Souvanna Phouma and several members of his neutralist Cabinet flee to Cambodia. This coup is, in large part, a response to attempts of rightist forces commanded by Colonel Kouprasith Abhay to sweep the leftists out of the capital in order to pave the way for a negotiated peace with General Phoumi Nosavan. Troops loyal to Phoumi Nosavan are currently in the process of marching on the capital after a series of recent victories over Government soldiers at the Ca Dinh River and at Paksane. On 12 December, yet another coup takes place —this time led by Quinim Pholsena, the allegedly pro-Communist Minister of Information in the defunct Souvanna Phouma Government. Within hours after this seizure of power, Soviet aircraft are reported unloading at least four howitzers at the Vientiane Airport. All of this action appears to have rather little effect on the real situation in Vientiane, which is controlled by troops loyal to Kong Le, who is reported to be extremely close to Quinim Pholsena. The New York Times speculates that the artillery weapons delivered by the Soviets may make a crucial difference in a showdown between left and

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right-wing forces. According to the Times, it was the pro-Western forces' possession of a battery of six 105-mm howitzers that gave them a decided edge in their recent battles with Government troops. It is mentioned, however, that the new regime controls little outside Vientiane. Most of the other cities are in the hands of soldiers loyal to Phoumi Nosavan, and the countryside remains a sort of no-man's-land as a result of the guerrilla activities of the Pathet Lao. *(New York Times, 11 and 13 December 1960, pp. 1+ and 1+ respectively.)*

mid to late December-- Laotian Prince Boun Oum's Government is invested by the King and the National Assembly after right-wing troops loyal to Phoumi Nosavan occupy Vientiane and Luang Prabang. This regime is recognized by the Western powers, while the Communist bloc continues to support the Government set up in the name of Souvanna Phouma in rebel-held territory. *(New York Times, 24 February 1961, p. 2.)*

13 December-- In a note to the US Government, the Soviet Union charges the United States with flouting the sovereign rights of the Laotian Government headed by Souvanna Phouma and with extending overt support to the rebel forces of General Phoumi Nosavan. US military advisers, the Soviets state, lead the rebel forces, which are supported by artillery and "Sikorsky" helicopters. A reconnaissance aircraft No. 830 was shot down by Government troops near Pakadin and was found to have four American officers aboard. At the request of the United States, Thailand made available its territory for active military operations against Government units in Laos and carries out a tight economic blockade of that country. As one of the participants and chairmen of the Geneva Conference, the Soviet Government decisively protests the US intervention in the internal affairs of Laos. *(Richard P. Stebbins, ed., Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1960 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1961), pp. 456-57.)*

17 December-- In a note to the USSR, the United States categorically rejects the Soviet charges of 13 December and instead condemns the Soviet action in airlifting weapons and ammunition in Soviet planes to rebel military forces fighting the armed forces of the Royal Government in Vientiane, Laos. The United States replies that it has brought no arms or ammunition into Laos since the end of November, and no US supplied helicopters have been used to direct artillery fire. The Lao Army had been equipped with M-24 tanks and 105 millimeter howitzers long before the 9 August 1960 rebellion against the Royal Lao Government. The US charges that the Soviet airlift has brought weapons and ammunition to the Pathet Lao forces under the cover of delivering food

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and petroleum products. *(Richard P. Stebbins, ed., Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1960 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1961), pp. 458-59.)*

18 December-- Chinese Premier Chou En-lai, at a dinner in Peking given by visiting Chief of State Norodom Sihanouk, declares that the situation in Laos is "particularly disquieting": "All governments and peoples concerned about peace in Indochina should at once take effective measures and action so as to insure that the Geneva agreements will be respected and that the independence and sovereignty of Laos will be free from encroachment." Chou remarks that, in spite of the continuance of imperialist aggression, the international situation is excellent and the forces of peace and justice have greatly surpassed the forces of war and injustice. *(New York Times, 19 December 1960, p. 3.)*

20 December-- The National Liberation Front of South Vietnam is founded. A detailed 10-point manifesto is issued. Because of the importance of this document, it is reproduced in this study in full:

"I. Overthrow the camouflaged colonial regime of the American imperialists and the dictatorial power of Ngo Dinh Diem, servant of the Americans, and institute a government of national democratic union.

The present South Vietnamese regime is a camouflaged colonial regime dominated by the Yankees, and the South Vietnamese Government is a servile government, implementing faithfully all the policies of the American imperialists. Therefore, this regime must be overthrown and a government of national and democratic union put in its place composed of representatives of all social classes, of all nationalities, of the various political parties, of all religions; patriotic, eminent citizens must take over for the people the control of economic, political, social, and cultural interests and thus bring about independence, democracy, well-being, peace, neutrality, and efforts toward the peaceful unification of the country.

II. Institute a largely liberal and democratic regime.

1. Abolish the present constitution of the dictatorial powers of Ngo Dinh Diem, servant of the Americans. Elect a new National Assembly through universal suffrage.

2. Implement essential democratic liberties: freedom of opinion, of press, of assembly, of movement, of trade-unionism; freedom of religion without any discrimination;

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and the right of all patriotic organizations of whatever political tendency to carry on normal activities.

3. Proclaim a general amnesty for all political prisoners and the dissolution of concentration camps of all sorts; abolish fascist law 10-59 and all the other anti-democratic laws; authorize the return to the country of all persons persecuted by the American-Diem regime who are now refugees abroad.

4. Interdict all illegal arrests and detentions; prohibit torture; and punish all the Diem bullies who have not repented and who have committed crimes against the people.

III. Establish an independent and sovereign economy, and improve the living conditions of the people.

1. Suppress the monopolies imposed by the American imperialists and their servants; establish an independent and sovereign economy and finances in accordance with the national interests; confiscate to the profit of the nation the properties of the American imperialists and their servants.

2. Support the national bourgeoisie in the reconstruction and development of crafts and industry; provide active protection for national products through the suppression of production taxes and the limitation or prohibition of imports that the national economy is capable of producing; reduce customs fees on raw materials and machines.

3. Revitalize agriculture; modernize production, fishing, and cattle raising; help the farmers in putting to the plow unused land and in developing production; protect the crops and guarantee their disposal.

4. Encourage and reinforce economic relations between the city and country, the plain and the mountain regions; develop commercial exchanges with foreign countries, regardless of their political regime, on the basis of equality and mutual interests.

5. Institute a just and rational system of taxation, eliminate harassing penalties.

6. Implement the labor code: prohibition of discharges, of penalties, of ill-treatment of wage earners; improvement of the living conditions of workers and civil servants;

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imposition of wage scales and protective measures for young apprentices.

7. Organize social welfare: find work for jobless persons; assume the support and protection of orphans, old people, invalids; come to the help of the victims of the Americans and Diemists; organize help for areas hit by bad crops, fires, or natural calamities.

8. Come to the help of displaced persons desiring to return to their native areas and to those who wish to remain permanently in the South; improve their working and living conditions.

9. Prohibit expulsions, spoliation, and compulsory concentration of the population; guarantee job security for the urban and rural working populations.

IV. Reduce land rent; implement agrarian reform with the aim of providing land to the tillers.

1. Reduce land rent; guarantee to the farmers the right to till the soil; guarantee the property right of accession to fallow lands to those who have cultivated them; guarantee property rights to those farmers who have already received land.

2. Dissolve "prosperity zones," and put an end to recruitment for the camps that are called "agricultural development centers." Allow those compatriots who already have been forced into "prosperity zones" and "agricultural development centers" to return freely to their own lands.

3. Confiscate the land owned by American imperialists and their servants, and distribute it to poor peasants without any land or with insufficient land; redistribute the communal lands on a just and rational basis.

4. By negotiation and on the basis of fair prices, repurchase for distribution to landless peasants or peasants with insufficient land those surplus lands that the owners of large estates will be made to relinquish if their domain exceeds a certain limit, to be determined in accordance with regional particularities. The farmers who benefit from such land distribution will not be compelled to make any payment or to submit to any other conditions.

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V. Develop a national and democratic culture and education.

1. Combat all forms of culture and education enslaved to Yankee fashions; develop a culture and education that is national, progressive, and at the service of the Fatherland and people.

2. Liquidate illiteracy; increase the number of schools in the fields of general education as well as in those of technical and professional education, in advanced study as well as in other fields; adopt Vietnamese as the vernacular language; reduce the expenses of education and exempt from payment students who are without means; resume the examination system.

3. Promote science and technology and the national letters and arts; encourage and support the intellectuals and artists so as to permit them to develop their talents in the service of national reconstruction.

4. Watch over public health; develop sports and physical education.

VI. Create a national army devoted to the defense of the Fatherland and the people.

1. Establish a national army devoted to the defense of the Fatherland and the people; abolish the system of American military advisers.

2. Abolish the draft system; improve the living conditions of the simple soldiers and guarantee their political rights; put an end to ill-treatment of the military; pay particular attention to the dependents of soldiers without means.

3. Reward officers and soldiers having participated in the struggle against the domination by the Americans and their servants; adopt a policy of clemency toward the former collaborators of the Americans and Diemists guilty of crimes against the people but who have finally repented and are ready to serve the people.

4. Abolish all foreign military bases established on the territory of Viet-Nam.

VII. Guarantee equality between the various minorities and between the two sexes; protect the legitimate interests of foreign citizens established in Viet-Nam and of Vietnamese citizens residing abroad.

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1. Implement the right to autonomy of the national minorities:

Found autonomous zones in the areas with a minority population, those zones to be an integral part of the Vietnamese nation.

Guarantee equality between the various nationalities: each nationality has the right to use and develop its language and writing system, to maintain or to modify freely its mores and customs; abolish the policy of the Americans and Diemists of racial discrimination and forced assimilation.

Create conditions permitting the national minorities to reach the general level of progress of the population: development of their economy and culture; formation of cadres of minority nationalities.

2. Establish equality between the two sexes; women shall have equal rights with men from all viewpoints (political, economic, cultural, social, etc.).

3. Protect the legitimate interests of foreign citizens established in Viet-Nam.

4. Defend and take care of the interests of Vietnamese citizens residing abroad.

VIII. Promote a foreign policy of peace and neutrality.

1. Cancel all unequal treaties that infringe upon the sovereignty of the people and that were concluded with other countries by the servants of the Americans.

2. Establish diplomatic relations with all countries, regardless of their political regime, in accordance with the principles of peaceful coexistence adopted at the Bandung Conference.

3. Develop close solidarity with peace-loving nations and neutral countries; develop free relations with the nations of Southeast Asia, in particular with Cambodia and Laos.

4. Stay out of any military bloc; refuse any military alliance with another country.

5. Accept economic aid from any country willing to help us without attaching any conditions to such help.

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IX. Re-establish normal relations between the two zones, and prepare for the peaceful reunification of the country.

The peaceful reunification of the country constitutes the dearest desire of all our compatriots throughout the country. The National Liberation Front of South Viet-Nam advocates the peaceful reunification by stages on the basis of negotiations and through the seeking of ways and means in conformity with the interests of the Vietnamese nation.

While awaiting this reunification, the governments of the two zones will, on the basis of negotiations, promise to banish all separatist and warmongering propaganda and not to use force to settle differences between the zones. Commercial and cultural exchanges between the two zones will be implemented; the inhabitants of the two zones will be free to move about throughout the country as their family and business interests indicate. The freedom of postal exchanges will be guaranteed.

X. Struggle against all aggressive war; actively defend universal peace.

1. Struggle against all aggressive war and against all forms of imperialist domination; support the national emancipation movements of the various peoples.

2. Banish all war-mongering propaganda; demand general disarmament and the prohibition of nuclear weapons; and advocate the utilization of atomic energy for peaceful purposes.

3. Support all movements of struggle for peace, democracy, and social progress throughout the world; contribute actively to the defense of peace in Southeast Asia and in the world." *(Text may be found in a number of sources, e.g. Marcus G. Raskin and Bernard B. Fall, eds., The Viet-Nam Reader (New York: Random House, 1965), pp. 216-21.)*

late 1960-- An initial North Vietnamese commentary on the NLF political program by DRV political leaders Tran Van Giau and Le Van Chat states that "[a]s citizens of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and natives of the South, we admit that, at the first reading, the program of the South Viet Nam Liberation National Front is not likely to get our full approval. The neutrality of the South means for Viet Nam a divergence of political character each side of the 17th parallel, while our country has always constituted a single entity." *(Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs, Mission to Hanoi (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), p. 246.)*

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27 December-- Poland joins the Soviet Union in demanding an end to the "threat to peace in Laos". Reflecting a Soviet note to Great Britain of four days earlier, the Polish People's Republic requests the reactivization of the three-nation International Control Commission of which it is a member. The statement charges that the US supplied the anti-Communist "rebel" side "with arms as well as personnel, who took direct part in military operations." The Polish Government "demands immediate cessation of intervention by the United States and its allies in the internal affairs of Laos and calls upon all peace-loving nations to take effective steps to insure peace to the Laotian people." It expresses the view that a conference of states that participated in the Geneva Conference of 1954 should be "urgently convened", its goals being to adopt steps to end the fighting, to halt "outside interference" and to insure peace and security. *(New York Times, 28 December 1960, p. 1.)*

28 December-- Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi declares that the situation in Laos has "developed to extremely serious proportions and that the CPR would "have to consider taking measures to safeguard its own security." In letters handed to the British and Soviet ambassadors in Peking, he calls on the two co-chairmen of the Geneva Conference to "take effective measures without delay" against the US and "its vassal, the Thailand Government." Chen Yi remarks that this war in Laos "is pregnant with danger of its further expansion." *(New York Times, 29 December 1960, p. 2.)*

1960-- The year also witnessed the reissue of Truong Chinh's The Resistance Will Win, originally published in 1947. This document is important for a number of reasons: First, its author is the former First Secretary of the Lao Dong Party and still remains its foremost theoretician and representative of the pro-Chinese "left wing" of the Party Politburo. He is currently chairman of the DRV National Assembly. Second, the publication of this essay, at a time when Hanoi's attention was increasingly focused on the South foreshadowed the course of the growing guerrilla struggle. At the beginning of the first stage of the resistance, writes Truong Chinh, Communist forces must remain on the defensive, retreating when attacked by the enemy and attacking only when they enjoy local superiority. "But gradually, towards the end of this stage, the enemy occupied zone being extended and the militia and guerilla movement being developed, guerilla warfare comes to play the major role." Of the second stage, that of equilibrium, he observes: "Gradually the enemy's forces and ours become

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equal. The enemy's strategy at this stage is to remain on the defensive while ours is to prepare for the general counter-offensive...Our military and political aim during this stage is to wear out the enemy's forces, annihilate them piecemeal, sabotage, disturb, give the enemy no peace to exploit the people easily; mobilise the people to wage armed struggle against the puppet administration, oppose the enemy's mopping-up policy, and strive to annihilate bandits and traitors...By the end of this stage a part of our guerilla warfare is turned into mobile warfare, which is thereby reinforced." Finally, comes the third stage of general counter-offensive: "In this stage, the balance of forces having changed in our favour, our strategy is to launch a general counter-offensive and the enemy's strategy is to defend and retreat...As for us, our consistent aim is that the whole country should rise up and go over to the offensive on all fronts, completely defeat the enemy, and achieve true independence and unification." In addition, the volume is important because it reopened the debate with General Giap on the merits of a long-range protracted guerrilla conflict vs Giap's preference for combining such tactics with larger "decisive" encounters (e.g. Dien Bien Phu). Later in the war, Giap would argue that time works against the DRV—that as the days pass, the firepower of the imperialists would take an ever greater toll of North Vietnamese/VC men and supplies. Victory can only be won in the short run by mounting a "continuous comprehensive offensive". Truong Chinh disagrees. He writes: "Time works for us. Time will be our best strategist... The guiding principle of the strategy of our whole resistance must be to prolong the war. To protract the war is the key to victory...In short if we prolong the war thanks to our efforts our forces will grow stronger, the enemy forces will be weakened...To achieve these results the war must be prolonged and we must have time...Those who want "lightening resistance war and rapid victory," who want to bring the whole of our forces to the battlefront to win speedy victory and rapidly to decide the outcome of the war, do not profit from the invaluable experiences of history; indeed they understand nothing of the strategy necessary to our people in this resistance war... All they would achieve would be the premature sacrifice of the bulk of forces in a few adventurous battles; they would commit heroic but useless suicide." Moreover, with Truong Chinh as with Mao, the fundamental tenet underlying the growing struggle is that the decisive element in guerrilla warfare is the human factor—the unity, high morale and revolutionary spirit that comes from the total belief in

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one's cause—as opposed to material factors such as modern weapons and other equipment. The essential tactical principle is to maintain the initiative, to strike the enemy at times and places of one's own choosing, to avoid set tactical confrontations with superior forces and to attack in large force only when tactical superiority has been achieved in the local situation. Finally, "[o]ur success in this resistance war will be partly owing to the difficulties, weaknesses and errors of the French (which we know how to exploit to the fullest extent), and partly thanks to the assistance of our allies; but it will be chiefly due to our close unity, our self-reliance, our strenuous efforts to strengthen and develop our forces. Long-term resistance and self-reliance are our general guiding principle in this war for national liberation." *(Truong Chinh, "The Resistance Will Win" in Primer for Revolt (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), pp. 112-13, 149-53, 164-69, 178-90.)*

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CHAPTER II

1961-1964

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1961-- General Giap issues a major theoretical and policy statement in a collection of essays on the theory and practice of guerrilla warfare. The volume is published under the title People's War, People's Army. In a characteristic understatement, the Publisher's Note (North Vietnamese) serving as an introduction to the work states that "publication of this book is most timely." Actually, Giap's essays are of a highly general nature, based mainly on the Vietminh experience against the French and often drawing heavily from the writings of previous guerrilla warfare theorists. In particular, most of his theory-building is at a level sufficiently general to be compatible with the writings of Giap's arch-competitor, Truong Chinh. Writing about the struggle against the French (yet with obvious implications for the war then intensifying in the South), Giap discusses the crucial importance of insurgent policy towards the peasantry: "The enemy of the Vietnamese nation was aggressive imperialism, which had to be overthrown. But the latter having long since joined up with the feudal landlords, the anti-imperialist struggle could definitely not be separated from anti-feudal action. On the other hand, in a backward colonial country such as ours where the peasants make up the majority of the population, a people's war is essentially a peasant's war under the leadership of the working class. Owing to this fact, a general mobilisation of the whole people is neither more nor less than the mobilisation of the rural masses. The problem of land is of decisive importance. From an exhaustive analysis, the Vietnamese people's war of liberation was essentially a people's national democratic revolution carried out under armed form and had twofold fundamental task: the overthrowing of imperialism and the defeat of the feudal landlord class, the anti-imperialist struggle being the primary task." By gradually building up a base of popular support throughout the country (but especially among the peasantry), by identifying oneself with those policies of greatest concern to the masses, by striking on a large scale only when tactical superiority is assured and by preparing for a long protracted political and military struggle under the close leadership of the Lao Dong Party, final victory will eventually be attained: "Only a long-term war could enable us to utilise to the maximum our political trump cards, to overcome our material handicap and to transform our weakness into strength. To maintain and increase our forces, was the principle to which we adhered,

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contenting ourselves with attacking when success was certain, refusing to give battle likely to incur losses to us or to engage in hazardous actions..." Through such a strategy, it is possible "[t]o exhaust little by little by small victories the enemy forces and at the same time to maintain and increase ours. In these concrete conditions it proves absolutely necessary not to lose sight of the main objective of the fighting that is the destruction of the enemy manpower. Therefore losses must be avoided even at the cost of losing ground. And that for the purpose of recovering, later on, the occupied territories and completely liberating the country." All this does not imply that the guerrilla struggle can be divorced from the "support of progressive peoples the world over, and more especially the peoples of the brother countries, with the Soviet Union at the head." International support, including the support of the "progressive" peoples within the country ruled by the imperialist enemy, is extremely important. In sum, "[f]rom the military point of view, the Vietnamese people's war of liberation proved that an insufficiently equipped people's army, but an army fighting for a just cause, can, with appropriate strategy and tactics, combine the conditions needed to conquer a modern army of aggressive imperialism." This lesson, it is maintained, is directly relevant to the situation in Vietnam at present. The North is now completely liberated. It forms the "vast rear of our army" and constitutes the "revolutionary base for the whole country." *(Vo Nguyen Giap, People's War, People's Army (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), esp. pp. 27-37, 47-50, 146-48.)*

1961-- Douglas Pike, writing about the "Communist" nature of the National Liberation Front, states:

"A Communist condition had prevailed within the NLF from the start and was assumed as a matter of course by Vietnamese of all political shadings. With respect to the mystique the matter of communism's paramountcy became somewhat more complex. Partly it was a matter of definition.

If a Communist is one who believes that man's future is shaped by his tools of production, that history is dominated by a class struggle for control of those means of production, that capitalism must grow increasingly evil, and that a brotherhood of workers and farmers swearing allegiance to an international ideal must unite to seize power and build its own society led by the vanguard, the proletariat, and in turn by the vanguard of the vanguard, the Communist party—if this is a Communist, then there were few Communists among the NLF. If, however, a Communist is one who swears blind allegiance

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to the world movement whose loci of power are Moscow and Peking, from which in this instance via Hanoi he draws through a political umbilical cord sustenance and strength that he cannot, and does not want to, supply himself, then most of the NLF's leaders, cadres, and true believers were Communists.

It was the difference between philosophic communism and alliance communism. For, in the first instance, to be a Communist meant mastering Marxism-Leninism, which NLF Vietnamese found notoriously difficult to understand since it is distinctly un-Vietnamese in nature and at variance with their most deeply ingrained views of the universe...The second instance meant simply establishing identity and achieving unity in which an NLF supporter had only to approve of the powerful foreign forces that stood behind him and his cause. Only among the higher-echelon cadres, and even here not with total acceptance, was communism regarded as a new body of wisdom to be learned, understood, and put to use." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), pp. 381-82.)*

January-- The Soviet foreign affairs journal International Affairs accuses the United States of "openly supporting the insurgent Phoumi Nosavan clique." It states that a "grave situation has arisen and the very existence of Laos as a sovereign state is at stake." The article further claims that the US engineered the fall of the coalition government that had been formed in 1957 with the participation of the Pathet Lao. In addition, the "imperialists" violated the Geneva Agreements by including Laos within SEATO. Following the events of August 1960 and the formation of the moderate Souvanna Phouma Government, SEATO instituted "fierce attacks" in order to undermine the new regime. The US produced their "stooge", Phoumi Nosavan, who organized a putsch against the legally constituted Government. The article charges the Americans with equipping the insurgents with guns, mortars and machineguns and with having encouraged Thailand, the Philippines, South Vietnam and Taiwan to supply soldiers and officers for Nosavan's troops. A SEATO "expeditionary corps" is said to have been formed and to be using the territory of neighboring Thailand as a base of operations. The claim is made that during the December battles for Vientiane, Government troops "shot down near the town of Pakadin reconnaissance plane No. 830 on board of which were four U.S. officers who directed the insurgents. Twenty American officers who were in command of SEATO units were killed in the street battles in Vientiane." In light of these events, Souvanna Phouma had "officially demanded

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of the U.S. Government that it stop military aid to the insurgent Nosavan. It also lodged an energetic protest with the Thai Government against its direct military support to the insurgents." *(D. Yakovlev, "Imperialism Launches Aggression", International Affairs (Moscow), no. 1 (January 1961), pp. 121-22.)*

January-- A Viet Cong document, "Instructions Regarding Activities in Cities", captured by the Saigon police in January states that the "responsibility and main goals that our Party has in view are to develop activities in the countryside, to increase activity in the cities, to reoccupy our former resistance bases, to extend our security zones, to limit the field of action and control of the enemy..." *(Department of State Publication 7308, A Threat to the Peace (Washington: GPO, 1961), pp. 92-93.)*

6 January-- Speaking at a Cuban Embassy reception, Marshal Chu Teh, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the Chinese People's Republic, warns the United States that its policies in Laos have carried it "to the brink of the precipice." Marshal Chu states that interference by the US in the internal affairs of that country is "getting more and more serious." He declares that "[t]his activity...violates the Geneva agreements, breaches the peace of Indochina and endangers China's security" and adds that it is necessary "to point out that the United States and those countries that follow it have gone far enough on this dangerous road and it is time they rein in their horse at the precipice, for it would be most dangerous to go further." He says that the Laotian question can be settled only by the Laotian people themselves and that any foreign intervention would end in the thorough defeat of the interventionists. *(New York Times, 7 January 1961, p. 3.)*

7 January-- The US State Department issues a statement on Laos charging that the Soviets and Vietnamese Communists have continued an extensive airlift of war materiel, including personnel, to rebel forces in the interior of Laos. During the period from 15 December through 2 January, at least 180 sorties by transport aircraft were flown into Laos in support of these forces. On the other hand, "United States aid has been extended to Laos within the framework of existing international agreements and at the request of the Royal Lao Government. No United States aid has been given except pursuant to agreements with that Government, nor has any been given without its knowledge and approval." *(Richard P. Stebbins, ed., Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1961 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1962), pp. 299-303.)*

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15 January-- In a letter to Cambodian Chief of State Norodom Sihanouk Chou En-lai accuses the United States of "making the Laotian situation even more dangerous" by delivering planes to the Laotian Government and placing its armed forces in the Western Pacific on the alert. Chou supports a Cambodian proposal for an enlarged version of the 1954 Geneva Conference on Indochina to seek a peaceful settlement of the civil war in Laos. *(New York Times, 16 January 1961, p. 3.)*

16 January-- Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister V. I. Kuznetsov delivers a protest to US Ambassador to Moscow Llewellyn E. Thompson Jr. on American activities in Laos. The USSR declares that the United States is risking a broadening of the conflict by bolstering troops loyal to the newly-formed right-wing Government of Prince Boun Oum with military aircraft. Specifically, the Soviets refer to the transfer of four AT-6 military training planes which have employed rockets and machine guns in action against leftist forces fighting in support of ousted Premier Souvanna Phouma. Charging the United States with provoking "extremely serious consequences" through its actions, the Soviets assert that Washington is in the process of transferring F-84 jet fighter-bombers to the Boun Oum Government. In an authoritative "Observer" article published in Pravda earlier in the day, even more serious charges are levelled: "In addition to planes and other military equipment, the United States has provided the enemies of the lawful Laotian Government with pilots and other military personnel. Volunteers have already been found...who are to be sent to Laos without delay to fight the lawful government of Prince Souvanna Phouma...Armed United States planes have appeared in the skies of Laos at a moment when the alerted Seventh...Fleet is being concentrated...in the South China Sea not far from Laos." This same day, State Department officials in Washington assert that the US has "every right" to supply aircraft and weapons to the "legal" Government of Laos. While they do not confirm that the United States is giving F-84's to Laos as Moscow alleges, they maintain that there would be no legal obstacle to doing so. *(New York Times, 17 January 1961, pp. 1 and 4. Text of Soviet protest on p. 4.)*

17 January-- Premiers Khrushchev and Chou En-lai in messages to ousted Laotian Premier Souvanna Phouma restate earlier proposals for "the urgent convocation" of a conference on Laos similar to that held in Geneva in 1954. Khrushchev declares that "[t]he peace-loving peoples cannot but be gravely alarmed by the fact that the United States lately has been taking measures aimed at direct intervention against Laos to take away its independence and convert Laos into a SEATO...base." *(New York Times, 18 January 1961, p. 4.)*

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19 January-- In an interview while in exile in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, neutralist Prince Souvanna Phouma expresses his bitterness towards the United States and the "group of clowns" (i.e. the Boun Oum Government) currently ruling in Vientiane. He states that US Assistant Secretary of State J. Graham Parsons "and others like him are directly responsible for the recent spilling of Lao blood." He accuses the Americans of betraying him. From the start, he says, the US opposed the only possible solution for Laos—the formation of a Government of National Union, to include the Pathet Lao movement. When he succeeded, in spite of the obstacles put forth by the US, the Americans continued their "sabotage", finally compelling his resignation as Premier in 1958. Subsequently, the United States "planted the seeds for destruction" when it forced the Government of his successor, Phoui Sananikone, to be strongly pro-Western and anti-Communist. Previous to 1958, Souvanna says, he had turned down both North Vietnamese and Chinese requests for embassies. In addition, he had assured them that he had no intention of recognizing the Nationalist Government on Taiwan or of permitting South Vietnam to have any more than a consulate in Vientiane. Neither would he allow Laos to become a US military base or American soldiers to set foot on her soil. He states that when, under pressure from the United States, Laos permitted Taiwan to install a consul general, raised the South Vietnamese mission to embassy status and signed an agreement allowing 100 US military men into the country to train the Royal Army, the Chinese Communists and North Vietnamese were irked and "the present crisis was born." *(New York Times, 20 January 1961, pp. 1 and 20.)*

31 January-- Representatives of the Chinese People's Republic and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam sign an agreement in Peking under which China will provide North Vietnam with a long-term loan of more than 141 million rubles. Other documents are signed on the same day. After the conclusion of their talks, the Economic and Trade Delegations of the two countries issue a press communique. It reads in part:

"An agreement on the provision of a long-term loan and complete sets of equipment to the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam by the People's Republic of China was signed...Under this agreement, the People's Republic of China will provide the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam with a long-term loan of 141,750,000 rubles. The Democratic Republic of Viet Nam will use this sum within seven years (1961-67) to pay for the complete sets of equipment and the technical assistance provided by China. According to the stipulations of a protocol, which was also signed on this occasion, on the provision of technical assistance and complete sets of equipment to the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam by the

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People's Republic of China, the People's Republic of China will help the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam build or expand 28 industrial and transport enterprises, in the fields of metallurgy, power generating, light industry, railways, etc.

A protocol on the mutual supply of goods between China and Viet Nam in 1961, a protocol on transit goods and relevant notes exchanged, making five documents in all, were signed ...According to the protocol on the mutual supply of goods in 1961, the People's Republic of China will in 1961 supply the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam with steel products, cotton, cotton yarn, automobile tires, bituminous coal, raw materials for the chemical industry, mechanical equipment, medicines, etc.; the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam will supply the People's Republic of China with anthracite, apatite, timber, cement, chromite, poultry, livestock, fruits, etc..." *("Broadening Fraternal Economic Cooperation", Peking Review, IV, no. 5 (3 February 1961), p. 9.)*

2 February-- Marshal Chen Yi, Foreign Minister of Communist China, says that Peking would provide aid if it were requested by the "lawful Laotian Government of Prince Souvanna Phouma." Speaking at a rally "in support of the Laotian people," he declares that US aid to the "illegal" Government of Prince Boun Oum is "unjust", while Soviet aid to the Souvanna Phouma regime is "just". Marshal Chen charges that the aim of the United States is to intervene in all Southeast Asia and "directly threaten" Burma, North Vietnam and China. He reiterates Peking's support for an "enlarged" conference along the lines of the 1954 Geneva meeting and for the reconstitution of the International Control Commission on Laos. Both the conference and the Commission, he states, can deal only with the regime of Souvanna Phouma. Otherwise, the situation would be "even more complicated, even more serious." *(New York Times, 3 February 1961, p. 4.)*

8 February-- An NLF "Research Document on the Organization of Peasants Association" captured by ARVN on 8 February in Bien Hoa states that "[o]ur final victory will depend on our policy in rural areas. The Front's policy should be in deep harmony with the laboring class and should be placed under the leadership of the Lao Dong Party in Viet-Nam..." *(Department of State Publication 7308, A Threat to the Peace, II (Washington: GPO, 1961), pp. 85-86.)*

15 February-- On this date, instructions issued by the Viet Cong Regional Committee of the South to inter-province committees are seized in Tay Ninh. These "Instructions" outline VC recruitment policies: "The policy of the Front is that of

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building up the massive solidarity of all the people without distinctions of race, social class, religion, political party, or sex, without distinctions among intellectuals, bourgeoisie, rich peasants or poor peasants or proletariats. Even those who were against the Resistance or the Party will be admitted to the Front on the sole condition that they be for peace and reunification of the country. All efforts should be directed to attack the enemy number one of the Vietnamese people, the U.S. and Ngo Dinh Diem clique." Of the various elements composing the Front, the most important are the workers and peasants. These two classes, however, do not at the moment "enjoy high prestige and are not capable of leading the revolution to decisive victory." For this reason, the Party has set up the Front in order to attract bourgeois intellectual circles and other sympathizers. The VC have no illusions concerning the dedication of such people:

"In reports read to the 3d Congress of the Party, Comrades Le Duan and Le Duc Tho observed that young men and girls, students, intellectuals, and the bourgeoisie in the cities, as well as rich and middle peasants in the country, are quickly converted to socialism but they are also very prompt to waver and to oppose the revolution, socialism and Marx-Leninism. They are inclined to self-interest, security and pleasure. In the present situation of South Viet-Nam, the Central Committee supports integration of these elements into the Front, not because the Party is betraying the policy of class struggle and of the revolution, not because the Party is going to entrust these classes with heavy responsibilities in the revolutionary liberation of South Viet-Nam, but only to utilize their abilities and their prestige in order to push forward the revolution and to give more prestige to the People's Front for the Liberation of South Viet-Nam.

This line of conduct is only a temporary policy of the Party. When the revolution is crowned with success, this policy will be revised. Then the Party will act overtly to lead the revolution in South Viet-Nam.

The policy of the Front will help us to control the majority of the people and to isolate the enemy, which will be reduced to a handful of reactionaries in the Government and in the Army. Our final victory will be assured..." *(Department of State Publication 7308, A Threat to the Peace (Washington: GPO, 1961), pp. 96-97.)*

22 February-- Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi addresses himself to a recent proposal by Laotian King Savang Vatthana which calls for a commission of neutral nations (Burma, Cambodia and Malaya)

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to supervise Laotian neutrality and determine the legitimacy of the Government in Vientiane. Chen assails the United States for its support of the plan, declaring that the establishment of such a commission is part of an American scheme to turn Laos into a second Congo and a US colony. He charges the Americans with trying to "legalize the rebel clique" in Vientiane. Three steps are cited as the only way to peacefully resolve the Laotian question: the convening of an "enlarged conference" along the lines of the 1954 Geneva gathering, the return of the International Supervisory and Control Commission for Laos, and the "firm recognition" of the neutralist Government of Souvanna Phouma. *(New York Times, 23 February 1961, p. 13.)*

23 February-- In an official "Observer" article in the Communist Party newspaper Pravda, the Soviets declare that Laotian King Savang Vatthana lacks power to negotiate an international settlement of the civil war dividing his kingdom. Moscow's statement, though not specifically referring to the King's recent proposals for a neutral commission that would bar all foreign intervention from Laos, in effect rejects any such solution on the grounds that under the Laotian Constitution the supreme head of state (the King) does not possess the executive powers to deal with an international commission. The article insists that the only executive body competent for this task is the Government set up by Souvanna Phouma. As for the King, he is little more than a prisoner in the hands of the rightist forces occupying Vientiane. "Observer" calls for an international conference modelled after the 1954 Geneva gathering and warns: "The continued interference of certain powers—members of the aggressive Southeast Asia Treaty Organization—in the internal affairs of Laos on the side of the rebels is aggravating the danger of the conflict's being extended." *(New York Times, 23 February 1961, p. 2.)*

3 March-- The New York Times reports that Laotian rebels with the aid of Soviet supplies and North Vietnamese advisers are overrunning the central section of Laos. It is reported in Washington on 21 March that President Kennedy has ordered an increase in US military aid to the Laotian Government. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 103.)*

27 March-- In a long official "Observer" editorial in Pravda, the Soviets indicate that they are willing to accept, conditionally at least, Western proposals on halting the fighting in Laos. Moscow's conditions for initiating a settlement are: that the US "not do anything that would extend the military conflict in Laos"; that neighboring Thailand not be used as a base for military supplies to troops loyal to the regime of Prince Boun Oum; that the United States military leave Laos immediately; that the US agree

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to join an international conference to negotiate a peaceful settlement. The Soviet statement is in reply to a British proposal of the previous week calling for a cease-fire, the reactivization of the International Control Commission to oversee the truce, and the convocation of a 14-nation international conference to guarantee Laotian neutrality and independence. The Pravda article states that President Kennedy's recent warning that the pro-Communist forces must stop armed attacks "actually means presenting an ultimatum to the Laotian people." Such threats, "Observer" notes, do not help attain a peaceful solution to the problem. After accusing the SEATO powers, whose foreign ministers are meeting in Bangkok, of preparing direct military intervention, Pravda declares: "The use of force by the SEATO countries against the people of Laos will be met with retaliatory force. The peace-loving states will not remain indifferent to SEATO plans for intervention against Laos." It is further suggested, however, that there exist "concrete opportunities for attaining a...settlement, provided all parties concerned seek to do so on a mutually acceptable basis and do nothing that would complicate the situation in Laos." The purpose of the proposed international conference would be to "discuss all questions arising from the international aspects of the new Laotian question and to help to restore peace in Laos on a basis acceptable to the lawful Government [that of Souvanna Phouma], the national patriotic forces [the Pathet Lao] and other political forces of Laos [presumably the Boun Oum Government and its military supporters, headed by Phoumi Nosavan]." *(New York Times, 28 March 1961, pp. 1 and 12.)*

28 March-- The Lao Dong Party organization in the Thu Dau Mot and Bien Hoa region issues "instructions" to its cadres concerning organizational strategy:

"...The organization of committees of the Popular Front at all levels, starting with the villages, is very important because the people want to know the leaders of the Popular Front at all levels and, through them, the policy of the Front.

We urge you, comrades, to start immediately the organization of committees of the Popular Front in village bases [controlled by the VC], "rice and beans" villages [mixed control], and in "rice and beans" villages [where the VC is] weak but where we have managed to exert a certain control over a few hamlets and where we can gather about 100 people for demonstrations and where we have already organized peasants associations...

The number of members of those [Party] committees working overtly as members of committees of the Popular Front varies according to

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the degree of control over each village, but in any case the minimum number of committee members operating overtly as such should be two. The other members, although they do not operate openly as committee members, should engage secretly in propaganda activities for the Popular Front, while waiting for the time when we have extended our control over the villages and all or the majority of committee members can operate openly as such.

To secure a broad base of representation within the Front, the number of Party members on committees of the Popular Front should not exceed two-fifths of the total membership..." *(Department of State Publication 7308, A Threat to the Peace (Washington: GPO, 1961), pp. 94-95.)*

31 March-- Peking newspapers give prominent display to a statement by Pathet Lao leader Souphanouvong which rejects a cease-fire in Laos as a prelude to an international conference. The headline in Jenmin Jih Pao, organ of the Chinese Communist Party, declares that a "[p]eaceful solution of the Laotian problem must be achieved through an immediate international conference." *(New York Times, 1 April 1961, p. 3.)*

1 April-- The Soviet Union, in an aide-memoire replying to proposals made on 23 March by Great Britain to end the crisis in Laos, calls for an international conference to be held in early April in Cambodia to negotiate a settlement by which Laos would become an independent and neutral nation. Moscow favors the British proposal that the two co-chairmen of the 1954 Geneva Conference "should issue an appeal for a cease-fire in Laos." The note adds: "In conformity with this the interested parties in Laos must, of course, hold talks on questions connected with the cease-fire." The Soviets also agree with the British proposal to call back the International Control Commission to supervise the cease-fire and to report back to the co-chairmen. In an apparent reference to recent strong declarations by President Kennedy, Moscow states that threats "and tactics of saber-rattling used of late by certain powers, far from promoting a settlement, may seriously aggravate the matter of settling the Laotian problem." *(New York Times, 2 April 1961, pp. 1 and 2.)*

2-3 April-- On 2 April, Chinese Communist Foreign Minister Chen Yi, speaking at a press conference in Jakarta following a six-day visit to Indonesia, states that his country would send troops into Laos if requested by the "legal Government" (i.e. that of Souvanna Phouma) of that country. The following day, Peking's People's Daily (Jenmin Jih Pao) reports without comment the Soviet reply to Britain's American-backed proposals for ending the Laotian civil war. *(New York Times, 2 and 3 April, pp. 2 and 3 respectively.)*

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April-- Commenting on the nature of an acceptable coalition government in Laos, the Soviet journal International Affairs refers to the declaration signed by Souvanna Phouma and Souphanouvong on 20 November 1960. Only that statement, it is reported, can serve as a basis for such a union: "That declaration stipulates that a coalition Government must be set up on the foundation of the lawful Laotian Government and include representatives of all political trends in Laos. This position arises out of recognition of the fact that a political settlement which does not offer corresponding representation to the Pathet Lao movement in Laos, is practically impossible." *(D. Yakovlev, "Consolidation of the Patriotic Forces", International Affairs (Moscow), no. 4 (April 1961), pp. 86-87.)*

April-- Politburo member Truong Chinh, in an article in the Lao Dong Party journal Hoc Tap, discusses the two strategic responsibilities of the Vietnamese revolution that were set forth by the Third Party Congress: "1. 'To carry out the socialist revolution in North Viet-Nam'; 2. 'To liberate South Viet-Nam from the ruling yoke of the U.S. imperialists and their henchmen in order to achieve national unity and complete independence and freedom throughout the country.'" Both of these responsibilities, it is stressed, are closely related. The success of the socialist revolution and construction in the North not only helps to consolidate that revolutionary base but inspires the "southern compatriots" in their fight against the Diem regime. Likewise, the struggle in the South both protects revolutionary bases "common to the entire country" thus contributing to the liberation and reunification processes and also encourages the "northern compatriots to do their best to build socialism." The struggle for liberation, it is realized, is "still arduous and complicated":

"However, we are firmly convinced that the revolution in South Viet-Nam and the struggle to achieve peaceful national reunification will surely succeed because they are evolving under these favorable conditions: socialist North Viet-Nam is being rapidly consolidated and strengthened, is providing good support to the South Vietnamese revolution, and is serving as a strong basis for the struggle for national reunification; the peaceful and socialist forces the world over are stronger than the warlike imperialist forces; and the colonial system of imperialism is disintegrating rapidly and is advancing toward destruction.

...[S]outhern compatriots have to rise and group themselves under the fighting banner of the Liberation Front to destroy the U.S.-Diemist regime and set up a National Democratic Coalition Government. Once established, this government will agree with the DRV

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Government about achieving peaceful national reunification under one form or another, including the holding of free elections throughout the country. Thus, though South Viet-Nam will be liberated by nonpeaceful means, the Party policy of achieving peaceful national reunification is still correct. It is precisely because of the revolutionary struggle of southern compatriots to overthrow the U.S.-Diemists and to liberate Viet-Nam that there are favorable conditions to carry out the policy of achieving peaceful national reunification." *(Department of State Publication 7308, A Threat to the Peace, II (Washington: GPO, 1961), pp. 5-7.)*

April-- The concept of the "General Uprising" is elaborated upon in an NLF "learning document": "We must come to comprehend all aspects of [activity] that lead to the General Uprising. There will be several uprisings, fractional, unsuccessful, etc., and the struggle movement must become fierce before we can launch the General Uprising that will yield us final victory...How will the struggle between us and the enemy proceed to the General Uprising? Due to the nonuniform development of the Revolution in the rural areas, the balance of power between us and the enemy varies from area to area. Consequently farmers do not rise up everywhere at the same moment. Even in those areas where there is a partial uprising and enemy control is broken, this [control] is ended only at the hamlet and village levels; the enemy's higher administrative apparatus remains, and he still has strong armed units and he is still safe in the urban areas from which he can send spies and agents with a design to attack us and gain back the rural area he has lost. Consequently the struggle in the rural areas will be fierce and complicated...But in the struggle we have many strong points and advantages, and the enemy has many deficiencies and limitations. The movement toward the General Uprising under the leadership of the Party will grow more fierce and widespread until it finally takes place." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 77.)*

12 April-- An editorial in Peking's People's Daily (Jenmin Jih Pao) states that the recent step-up of "US intervention" in South Vietnam calls for "serious attention". It accuses the West of plotting "further intervention and aggression" at the recent Bangkok meeting of SEATO and at the discussions between US President Kennedy and British Prime Minister Macmillan held on 6 April. It comments that the "mounting popular struggle in south Viet Nam against the reactionary rule of the U.S.-Diem clique is precisely the outcome of the United States' pursuance of a policy of aggression in south Viet Nam. At the same time, it testifies to the failure of this policy. Hence the only conclusion to be drawn is: the United States Government must immediately halt its intervention and aggression in south Viet Nam and withdraw all its

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military personnel from there so that the Geneva agreements can be implemented." *("Stop Washington's Meddling in South Vietnam!", Peking Review, IV, no. 16 (21 April 1961), pp. 12-13.)*

12 April-- President Kennedy informs a news conference that the Soviets are continuing to airlift supplies into Laos but that they are not increasing the effort--only continuing it. He hopes for a cease-fire so that both sides can stop supplying the opposing forces in that country. "Our supplies to the Government forces," he says, "are continuing." *(Public Papers of the Presidents, John F. Kennedy, 1961 (Washington: GPO, 1962), pp. 260-61.)*

13 April-- The Foreign Ministry of the Chinese People's Republic issues an official statement on the intensified US "intervention" in Vietnam. It says that SEATO, under the direction of the United States, openly adopted a decision to intervene in South Vietnam during its recent meeting in Bangkok: "The U.S. Government is stepping up the provision of large quantities of military aid to the south Viet Nam authorities and is planning to help the Ngo Dinh Diem clique enlarge its army by 30,000 additional men. Moreover, Harry D. Felt, Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Armed Forces in the Pacific region, has, upon orders, visited the southern part of Viet Nam to carry out activities and take a direct part in engineering new schemes of intervention. At the same time, certain important officials of the U.S. Government, maliciously distorting the facts, slandered and assailed the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, with a view to creating pretexts for further intervention in the situation of the southern part of Viet Nam." In view of these events, the CPR "fully supports" the just demands of the North Vietnamese Government: that the US stop its interference in the affairs of the Vietnamese people, that the Diem Government halt its suppression of the "patriotic movement of the people" in the southern part of Vietnam, and that the co-chairmen of the Geneva Conference and the members of the International Supervisory and Control Commission "adopt emergency measures to halt the intervention of the United States and the SEATO bloc and ensure that the Geneva agreements be respected and scrupulously implemented in the southern part of Viet Nam." *("Foreign Ministry Statement on Intensified US Intervention in South Vietnam", Peking Review, IV, no. 16 (21 April 1961), p. 13.)*

20 April-- Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., who served as an assistant to President Kennedy, states that on this date the Chief Executive directed American advisers in Laos to put on their uniforms and to accompany Laotian troops as a Military Assistance Advisory Group. Schlesinger says that this was intended to demonstrate firmness to the Soviets who had not as yet accepted the US

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cease-fire appeal. *(Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., A Thousand Days, John F. Kennedy in the White House (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1965), p. 336.)*

24 April et seq.-- As co-chairmen of the Geneva Conference on Indochina, Great Britain and the Soviet Union call for an immediate cease-fire in Laos, the convening of an international conference to settle the Laotian problem to meet in Geneva on 12 May, and request India to convene the International Control Commission for Laos to include representatives from Poland and Canada. Subsequently, the ICC is reconvened. It has the specific purpose of supervising and controlling a cease-fire in that country. It remains on the ground in Laos for this purpose during the entire course of the 1961-62 negotiations at Geneva. Although its activities are limited because of its restrictive terms of reference, it exercises a general conciliatory and moderating effect on the situation in Laos. *(Richard P. Stebbins, ed., Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1961 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1962), pp. 308-10; 87th Cong 2d Sess, Foreign Assistance and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1963, Hearings before the Committee on Appropriations, U.S. Senate (Washington: GPO, 1962), p. 712.)*

25 April-- The Soviet Government informs Britain that the Pathet Lao have agreed to comply with the request of Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko for a cease-fire in Laos. This same day, in a statement broadcast by Hanoi radio, Souvanna Phouma and his half-brother, Prince Souphanouvong, express their support for the cease-fire appeal. Souvanna Phouma invites both pro-Communist and pro-Western factions to send representatives to the Pathet Lao headquarters in Xiengkhouang to discuss the "enlarging of the government." On this same day, the Government of rightist Prince Boun Oum accepts the cease-fire. *(New York Times, 26 April 1961, pp. 1 and 8.)*

4 May-- In a statement at a news conference on the Communist threat to Vietnam, Secretary of State Dean Rusk declares that an upsurge of Communist guerrilla activity has apparently stemmed from a decision made in May 1959 by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of North Vietnam which calls for the reunification of the country by all "appropriate means." Remarkably coincidental with the renewed Communist activity in Laos, the Lao Dong Party of North Vietnam on 10 September 1960 adopted a resolution which declared that the Vietnamese revolution must liberate the South from the "rule of US imperialists and their henchmen." Rusk states that Pathet Lao activities in Laos make more secure one of the three principal routes by which North Vietnamese armed units have been able to infiltrate the RVN. The other two routes are directly across the 17th parallel and by sea along the coastline of RVN. In view of the emergency, Rusk says that President Kennedy "has authorized an increase in the amount of

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military assistance, and a number of other measures have been determined upon. Furthermore, the United States has undertaken training and advisory measures which are designed to strengthen both materially and militarily the ability of the Viet-Nam armed forces to overcome this increased Communist threat. A part of the effort, of course, must include in a situation of this sort a vigorous civil program as well in the economic and social field." *(Richard P. Stebbins, ed., Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1961 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1962), pp. 318-19.)*

6 May-- Nikita Khrushchev, in a speech centering on US-Soviet arms talks, welcomes the following week's negotiations on Laos, which he says "must be an independent, neutral country." He states that a settlement can be reached provided the Western powers "reject any attempt to turn Laos into their own military stronghold." *(New York Times, 7 May 1961, p. 1.)*

8 May-- The Viet Cong "Radio Liberation" broadcasts an evaluation of the implementation of the instructions issued by the 3rd Congress of the Lao Dong Party. It is stated that "[i]n general the above-mentioned decision of the congress...concerning the Revolution to be carried out in South Vietnam has been correctly executed by the Party in South Vietnam and the different echelons of the Party...In order to meet the exigencies of the Revolution and to meet the new situation that the Revolution faces, all of us—cadres and members of the Front as well as those who love their Fatherland and the Revolution in South Vietnam—must strictly execute the basic and immediate mission as determined by the [Lao Dong] Party..." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 323.)*

12-15 May-- On 12 May, the 14-nation conference on Laos opens in Geneva following a cease-fire in Laos. It deadlocks over a procedural question: the Soviets insist that representatives of the Pathet Lao be seated along with spokesmen for the pro-Western Lao Government and the neutralist Prince Souvanna Phouma. Secretary Rusk opposes this as tantamount to recognition of the rebels, but on 15 May the conference agrees to seat all three Laotian groups as "spokesmen" for the forces operating in that country. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 104.)*

16 May-- At the fourteen-nation Geneva Conference on Laos, Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi lashes out at SEATO: "The aggressive SEATO military bloc has become the principal tool of the United

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States for encroaching on the sovereignty of different countries, interfering in their internal affairs and incessantly creating turmoil in Southeast Asia. This bloc is the root of tension not only in Laos but also in the whole of Southeast Asia. Only by abolishing this bloc can peace and security in Southeast Asia, including Laos, be preserved and consolidated." *(Harold C. Hinton, Communist China in World Politics (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966), pp. 348-49.)*

17 May-- On this date, the United States and the Soviet Union propose that all foreign troops be withdrawn from Laos. The Soviet "Declaration on the Neutrality of Laos" states that the participating members in the 14-nation conference on Laos (Burma, Cambodia, Canada, Communist China, North Vietnam, France, India, Laos, Poland, South Vietnam, Thailand, the USSR, Great Britain and the USA) recognize, in conformity with the 1954 Geneva Agreements, the neutrality of Laos. This means that the Kingdom of Laos pledges to "observe neutrality, not to participate in any military alliances, blocs and coalitions, not to associate itself with any international agreement which directly or indirectly would involve the Laotian Government in commitments of a military-political or military nature, and not to permit the establishment on its territory of foreign military bases or military strong points, not to permit the use of the territory of Laos by foreign States for any other military purposes, and not to allow foreign States to introduce troops or military personnel into Laos..." The draft states that the participating nations pledge to refrain from any act that might directly or indirectly impair the sovereignty and neutrality of Laos, to not impose any political conditions on such aid as might be given to that country, to not involve Laos in any military or other alliance incompatible with its status of neutrality:

"...They undertake not to allow the presence in Laos of any foreign troops or military personnel, not to allow the establishment in Laos of any foreign military base or military strong point, not to resort to force or threat of force, and not to do any other act that might result in the violation of peace in that country.

All foreign troops and military personnel now present in Laos shall be withdrawn within a specified period."

Furthermore, the draft states, all participating countries agree that treaties and agreements conflicting with the status of Laotian neutrality (including SEATO and its Protocol) shall

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hereby cease to have effect. In case of violation or the threat of violation of the independence and neutrality of that nation, the signatories will hold "consultations for the purpose of taking measures to remove that threat." Along with this document, the Soviets submit a detailed proposal for administering the cease-fire and conducting the withdrawal of foreign troops and military personnel from Laos. The International Supervisory and Control Commission shall "supervise and control" these processes. It shall be governed by a rule of unanimity and will act only on the instructions of Britain and the Soviet Union as co-chairmen of the conference. The United States responds to these proposals by arguing that they will give Moscow a "double-barreled veto". By 20 May, US Secretary of State Rusk and other delegation leaders have returned home, leaving deputies in charge of the negotiations. *(CQ Background, China and US Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 104; texts of Soviet proposals may be found in Anita Lauve Nutt, Troika on Trial, Appendixes, v. III (Contract SD-220, Office of International Security Affairs, DOD, September 1967), pp. 78-82.)*

17 May-- The Communist Party newspaper Pravda for the first time admits that Soviet aircraft have been supplying allied forces in Laos. According to this report, Soviet Aeroflot (commercial airline) planes are flying "fuel and food" to the Plaine des Jarres "under an agreement between the Laotian and Soviet Governments."* *(New York Times, 18 May 1961, p. 4.)*

21 May-- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China issues a statement condemning increased US "aggression and intervention" in "south Vietnam"** and "disruption" of the Geneva Conference on Laos. It claims that the "eight-point programme" agreed to by President Diem and US Vice-President Lyndon Johnson in his recent visit to South Vietnam "thoroughly undermines the 1954 Geneva agreements...and gravely jeopardizes peace in Indochina and Southeast Asia." In reality, it is no more than "a programme aimed at turning south Viet Nam wholly into a U.S. military base and colony." Such activities, coming at this time, show that "the United States has no intention of discussing seriously at the Conference the question of how to ensure the peace,

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* The Soviet Union still recognized Souvanna Phouma as the legal Premier of Laos.

**Note the use of the small letter "s" to describe South Vietnam, an indication that the Chinese support the DRV contention that there is only one Vietnam, and that "South Vietnam" has no legitimate status as a legal government.

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independence, neutrality and unity of Laos, but is trying...to disrupt the Conference, or to put Laos under the supervision of an international body in the way which the United States desires, that is, to realize a joint international control, so as to carry out new intervention in Laos. In this regard, all countries and peoples interested in peace in Indo-China and the outcome of the enlarged Geneva Conference must be highly vigilant." The Government of China, "and the Chinese people as well", it is stated, "cannot, of course, remain indifferent to the present increasingly grave situation brought about by the United States in south Viet Nam. We hold that the Co-Chairmen and the other participating nations of the Geneva Conference have an unshirkable responsibility, that they ought to take effective steps to check U.S. intervention and aggression in south Viet Nam, ensure the implementation of the Geneva agreements and peace in Indo-China and Southeast Asia." *("China Opposes US Military Intervention in South Viet Nam", Peking Review, IV, no. 21 (26 May 1961), p. 10.)*

24 May-- Chinese Communist Foreign Minister Chen Yi, at the 14-nation conference on Laos, accuses the United States of planning wholesale interference in the political development of Laos through an "international condominium" aimed at making that kingdom a colony again. The Foreign Minister's response to a suggestion made by US Secretary of State Dean Rusk that economic aid to Laos be administered through an international agency is that such actions would mean the suppression of the "Laotian peoples' national and democratic movements" and the elimination of the "patriotic forces in Laos." This, he says, is a "barefaced interference in the internal affairs of Laos." He supports the Communist demand for a veto on the International Control Commission. In order for the crisis to be resolved, five principles must be followed: 1. Any solution must be based on the Agreements of the 1954 Geneva Conference. 2. Any agreement must respect the independence and sovereignty of Laos. 3. Laotian neutrality must be insured. 4. Sharp distinction must be made between the internal and international aspects of the Laotian question because the "internal problems of Laos can only be solved by the Laotians themselves...Any international agreement must in no way interfere in the internal affairs of Laos." 5. All nations participating in the conference must participate in and "strictly abide by" any agreement. A spokesman for the US delegation comments that this sounds like "a thinly veiled plan to allow Communist China to gain political control of Laos by subversion." *(New York Times, 25 May 1961, pp. 1 and 5.)*

30 May-- At this point, the 14-nation conference on Laos appears stalled over Soviet refusal to implement what a US spokesman

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terms the "primary conditions of the conference." Specifically, the American delegation objects to Pathet Lao violations of the cease-fire that have reportedly occurred and insists that the ICC receive new instructions to allow it to control such outbreaks. The Soviets emphasize that the investigation of such charges of armistice violations are not part of the conference's work. They insist that the first order of business is Soviet proposals for Laotian neutrality—not American charges of truce violations. The conference has been in recess for a week, unable to reopen because of this issue. *(New York Times, 31 May 1961, pp. 1 and 8.)*

4 June-- In a joint statement following their discussions at the Vienna Summit Conference, President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev state: "The President and the Chairman reaffirmed their support of a neutral and independent Laos under a government chosen by the Laotians themselves, and of international agreements for insuring that neutrality and independence, and in this connection they have recognized the importance of an effective cease-fire." *(Public Papers of the Presidents, John F. Kennedy, 1961 (Washington: GPO, 1962), p. 438.)*

4 June-- In an interview in February 1966, Secretary Rusk tells Professor Henry F. Graff that at the Vienna Summit Conference Khrushchev had agreed with President Kennedy's suggestion that "we all get out of Laos." Khrushchev was not, however, willing to include Vietnam in the agreement. Rusk states further that after the Vienna meeting in June 1961 the United States should have put down "a lot of blue chips immediately" to head off "the other side" and to say, "You can't have South Vietnam." He says that he believes that such action would have prevented misunderstanding with the Communist world. *(Henry F. Graff, "Teach-In on Vietnam...The President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of State," The New York Times Magazine, 20 March 1966.)*

6 June-- In an address to the American public reporting on the results of the Vienna Conference with Khrushchev, President Kennedy states that both sides recognized the need to reduce the dangers of the Laotian situation, endorsed the concept of a neutral and independent Laos much in the manner of Burma and Cambodia, and recognized the need for an effective cease-fire. He also says that Khrushchev had told him that "there are many disorders throughout the world, and he should not be blamed for them all." *(Public Papers of the Presidents, John F. Kennedy, 1961 (Washington: GPO, 1962), p. 444.)*

12 June-- At Geneva, Chinese Communist Foreign Minister Chen Yi tells the 14-nation conference on Laos that Laos "is a victim of the

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United States policy of intervention" and warns that Communist China "will never be a party to...enforcing an international condominium over Laos in the name of international control over its neutrality." The Thai delegation walks out during his speech. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 105.)*

13 June-- Mr. Walter P. McConaughy, US Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, tells the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that Laos and South Vietnam are in serious trouble with their freedom being assaulted by Communist insurgencies supported from the outside. Specifically, he claims that Soviet aircraft are flying 105mm artillery into Laos from airfields near Hanoi, where Chinese Communist soldiers stand guard. In South Vietnam some 500 citizens are being assassinated each month. He states that the Chinese Communist menace to Asian security enjoys "the powerful backstop and support, albeit within some limits, of the Soviet Union." *(87th Cong 1st Sess, International Development and Security, Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate (Washington: GPO, 1961), pt 1, pp. 549-51.)*

26 June-- At the Geneva Conference on Laos, Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi describes US proposals to strengthen the ICC as "preposterous" and "absolutely impermissible". Chen says that the "single-minded purpose" of the United States and its followers is to use international controls to destroy the patriotic forces in Laos. Any attempt to impose an "international trusteeship" on that country can only result in "rekindling war flames" in the Southeast Asian kingdom. He does mention that the ICC should control the departure of foreign troops but hastens to add that he is referring to the 300 US military advisors in Laos, plus troops from Thailand, South Vietnam and Taiwan which, he claims, are also in that country. No mention is made of the 1,000 North Vietnamese advisors and front-line troops that United States sources contend are with the Pathet Lao. Nedville E. Nordness, US delegation spokesman, comments that it is obvious that the Chinese "do not want controls that would stop seven years of North Vietnamese infiltration into Laos for the purpose of keeping the country in turmoil...They are adamant in their desire to keep the road wide open from north to south so that they can fulfill their plans, using the North Vietnamese for infiltration, subversion and the ultimate take-over of Laos that will give them a gateway to Southeast Asia." *(New York Times, 27 June 1961, p. 6.)*

29 June-- Premier Khrushchev, at a Soviet-Vietnamese Friendship Meeting, tells Pham Van Dong that the Soviets fully support his position on peaceful reunification and denounces US activities in

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South Vietnam and Laos. He uses the example of the DRV to argue that Marxism-Leninism is a relevant model for developing nations to adopt in modernizing their societies:

"The wonderful progress of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the Chinese People's Republic, the Korean People's Democratic Republic and the Mongolian People's Republic has borne out the correctness of Lenin's ideas, has shown that it is precisely the socialist system that opens up limitless opportunities to peoples who have won their freedom from colonial and imperialist oppression. The experience of the Vietnamese people and the peoples of the other socialist countries is taking on enormous significance for oppressed peoples struggling for the realization of their most cherished hopes and aspirations.

The contentions of colonialism's defenders that the ideas of Marx and Lenin are not suitable for resolving the social problems of colonial countries, that these ideas cannot be congenial to the peoples of the East, seem pathetic and ludicrous."

Khrushchev also emphasizes that the "struggle of the people of South Vietnam is not the handiwork of Moscow, not the intrigues of the Communists. It is an expression of popular rage; it represents the fervent resolve of the people to have done with poverty and lack of rights; it is a struggle against the colonialist despoilers and against their henchmen, who follow an even crueller policy than do the colonialists themselves...The Soviet government fully supports the legitimate demand of the Vietnamese people for an end to interference by the imperialists in the affairs of South Vietnam. The Soviet people are firmly convinced that the just struggle of the Vietnamese for the unification of their homeland will end in complete victory." *("Speech by Comrade N. S. Khrushchev at Meeting Devoted to Soviet-Vietnamese Friendship", trans. DES, Pravda, 29 June 1961, pp. 2-3.)*

3 July-- Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi proposes that the Geneva Conference on Laos end its general debate and proceed to "substantive negotiations" on the neutrality question, thus bypassing American concern with international controls of the ceasefire. The Soviet representative, Georgi M. Pushkin, immediately backs this move. *(New York Times, 4 July 1961, p. 3.)*

5 July-- In a joint communique, effusive with mutual praise, Soviet and North Vietnamese delegations express support for the national liberation movement and affirm that the activity of "aggressive" military and political groupings (especially SEATO) presents a serious threat to the peace of Southeast Asia. The "imperialists" are active on the very borders of North Vietnam and China trying to keep certain nations under their control and suppress the growing liberation movements. The two delegations state that they are convinced that military blocs of the SEATO type must be abolished

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if a zone of peace is to be created in the region. The Soviet Government expresses its "full support" for the proposals of the DRV on the "peaceful unification of Vietnam, which provide for the re-establishment of normal relations in the southern part of the country, for the reduction of armed forces and budget appropriations for defense in the North as well as in the South of the country and for bilateral pledges not to participate in any military alliance and not to permit any foreign power to build military bases on Vietnam's territory." Interference by the United States and the negative attitude on the part of the Diem regime are described as "serious obstacles" to reunification in accordance with the Geneva Accords. Emphasis is placed on the inseparability of the struggle for reunification from the growth of Soviet might and that of the socialist camp. The Vietnamese people, it is said, will forever be grateful "for the enormous and exceptionally valuable help rendered by the Soviet Union in the form of material funds, equipment and specialists." *("Joint Soviet-Vietnamese Communique", trans. DES, Pravda, 5 July 1961, p. 2.)*

26 July-- In the first serious outburst of polemics at the Geneva Conference on Laos since point-by-point negotiations began the previous week, Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Chang Han-fu states that SEATO's offer of aid to Laos is a violation of that nation's neutrality and sovereignty. These charges are promptly rejected by US delegate W. Averell Harriman who replies that to deny Laos the right to appeal for help against aggression would itself be an infringement of Lao sovereignty. *(New York Times, 27 July 1961, p. 3.)*

28 July-- A Peking Review editorial denounces US-Diem "sabotage" of the Geneva Agreements and notes that in the "past seven years, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the Vietnamese people have made unremitting efforts to uphold the Geneva agreements and peace in Indo-China. As early as 1955, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam demanded that consultations be held in accordance with the Geneva agreements so that the country could be unified through democratic general elections as scheduled in July 1956. Since then, it has issued statements on 18 occasions and written to the two Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Conference and the south Vietnamese authorities, proposing the holding of consultations and free general elections; it has put forward 57 proposals for restoring normal relations between the two regions to facilitate mutual contacts and visits between the people in the southern and northern parts of the country." *("Support Vietnamese People's Struggle", Peking Review, IV, no. 30 (28 July 1961), p. 6.)*

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30 July et seq.-- The Moscow Statement of 6 December 1960 had declared that one of the goals Communists are striving for in underdeveloped countries is the creation of "national democracies". With the publication of the draft program of the Soviet Communist Party on 30 July and the subsequent appearance of a series of articles on the "national democratic state" in authoritative Soviet journals, a new theoretical concept is elaborated. The national democratic state is to be a transitional stage in the gradual evolution of feudal and colonial societies along the path to the eventual attainment of socialism and Communism. This process may occur in countries where the local Communist Party is not yet strong enough to lead the struggle for independence but where "progressive" elements of the national bourgeoisie recognize that their interests and those of their nation do not coincide with those of the "ruling imperialist circles". Thus, an alliance between Communist and non-Communist opponents of colonial or neo-colonial domination may result in the ouster of the "reactionary rulers". In some countries, this process and the subsequent gradual acquisition of power by the Communists might be peaceful. Since the forces of the national bourgeoisie are at least initially likely to be more powerful than those of the Communists, the Communists will frequently have to restrict their role to that of "junior partners" in the alliance. They must be willing in many instances to follow the leadership of the "progressive" bourgeoisie. Eventually, after the new (predominantly non-Communist) regime is set up, the Communists will seek to influence the bourgeois leadership to adopt favorable policies. The new regime will be infiltrated; gradually the nationalist ruler will become more and more dependent on the Communists until finally the transition to full Marxist control can be made, perhaps free of violence. It should be noted that this vision is radically different from that held by Mao Tse-tung and Ho Chi Minh with their predominant emphasis on violence and the tight control of the national liberation struggle by the Communist Party. Mao was soon to accuse Khrushchev of abandoning the leadership of the anti-imperialist movement to reactionaries who, once they gained power, would turn on the Communists and destroy them. Subsequent events in Indonesia and Ghana tended to support the Chinese claim. The aftermath of the abortive 1965 coup in Indonesia, in particular, was a major blow to the "national democratic state". After Khrushchev's fall, relatively little was heard of this concept, although the Soviet interpretation of the transition to socialism in underdeveloped countries remains essentially unchanged (note, e.g., the events that have transpired in Egypt). *(See, e.g., B. Ponomarev, "Concerning the National Democratic State", trans. DES, Kommunist, no. 8, 1961.)*

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31 July-- The 14-nation conference on Laos bypasses the question of the withdrawal of foreign troops from the kingdom. The discussion is postponed until the conference takes up the question of international controls to guarantee the observance of the projected declaration on the neutrality of Laos. *(New York Times, 1 August 1961, p. 7.)*

1 August-- The Communist powers at Geneva make a determined effort to oust French military instructors from Laos, demanding that no exception be made for the French under a projected plan to refrain from introducing foreign military personnel into Laos. France had called for recognition of her right to supply a military mission for the training of the Laotian National Army. This right had been granted by the 1954 Geneva Agreements. Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Georgi Pushkin responds that the continued presence of the French "is an infringement of the sovereignty of Laos." He adds that the 1954 accord is "obsolete". *(New York Times, 2 August 1961, p. 3.)*

15 August-- At the 14-nation conference on Laos, the Soviet Union joins China in warning the Western nations that the outlook for the conference is dimmed by a stalemate over the withdrawal of foreign troops from that Southeast Asian kingdom. The Communists demand that the withdrawal of foreign troops be "immediate" and not linked to the international control arrangements demanded by the West to guarantee that the departure is effective. The United States had submitted a plan whereby all foreign military personnel would be reported to the ICC and would leave the country by designated routes under the Commission's surveillance. *(New York Times, 16 August 1961, p. 4.)*

21 August-- US Secretary of State Dean Rusk discusses the situation in Laos and the Kennedy-Khrushchev Summit Meeting at Vienna in an appearance before the Senate Committee on Appropriations. He says that in the Geneva negotiations, the Communist bloc has been refusing to agree to international machinery to patrol Laotian neutrality and has been objecting to the removal of foreign troops from Laos, obviously because of the large numbers of Viet Minh that are involved there. Rusk also tells of the conversations with Khrushchev at Vienna, discussions in which Khrushchev stressed the historical inevitability of the triumph of Communism and stated bluntly that he would support revolutionary groups in whatever country it became possible to do so. The Secretary says that Khrushchev went around the globe, pointing out countries in which he considered conditions were ripe for this kind of revolution. Rusk says: "We came away feeling that he looks upon what is happening in these underdeveloped parts of the world as an opportunity, as fertile ground..., and he looks upon the kind

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of technician that they are using now as a way to jump over alliances, to outflank alliances like NATO." Rusk still believes that collective defense is important, but he adds: "In the longer run, this battle is going to be won by the emergence of vital independent countries who, by their own performance, are impervious to the kind of penetration that Mr. Khrushchev is talking about." When asked what Khrushchev has said about Communist China, Rusk replies: "He was very careful to insist more than once that he was, of course, not speaking for China. He simply left it that China had to liquidate the Formosa question. He didn't talk about China much...I think there is something there that caused him to stay off the subject." *(87th Cong 1st Sess, Foreign Assistance and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1962, Hearings before the Committee on Appropriations, U.S. Senate (Washington: GPO, 1961), pp. 112-13, 135-37.)*

28 August-- The political aspects (struggle movement) of the fight against the Diem regime are, at this time, being emphasized over its military components (violence program). Clandestine newspapers sum up the NLF's accomplishments at this time: "In the light of the Front's program of action and due to the widened scale of the struggle, the struggle movements among the Southern people became more and more abundant; the slogans of the struggle manifested more and more clearly the deep political character of the movement. The struggle for livelihood and democratic rights was closely coordinated with the political struggle...From complaints, petitions, and small demonstrations, the movement advanced to big demonstrations, including thousands of people marching into the cities and towns, and uprisings that exterminated and gave warnings to 'wicked agents,' demolished agrovilles, and smashed the reactionary government..." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 15.)*

September-- The Soviets comment on the negotiations taking place in Geneva on the Laotian problem. They claim that "no tangible results have been achieved so far." They accuse the United States of training Laotian rebel troops in Thailand on a large scale, of planning to maintain its military advisors in Laos, and of airdropping "subversive rebel groups" into territory held by Pathet Lao and neutralist forces. They claim that Franco-American proposals to strengthen the ICC represent an attempt to turn that organ into an instrument by which the Laotian Government can be controlled and any kind of social or political change considered undesirable by the West can be blocked:

"These proposals would place Laos under complete international control, in particular they provide the Commission

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with the right of free and unrestricted access to all areas of Laos by land, sea and air and full freedom to inspect at any moment airfields, buildings and establishments, and even organisations and groups, which 'might be of a military character'. In accord with the American additions to the French draft Protocol on Control, the Laotian Government and the different sides in Laos are obliged to inform the International Commission of the location, organisation, strength and armament of both their regular and irregular forces, of the location and quantity of ammunition and military equipment at their disposal, and so on.

Furthermore, the Franco-American Protocol on Control in Laos goes so far as to propose the setting up of a kind of permanent international body composed of the 13 ambassadors of the countries participating in the Conference, a sort of trusteeship council which would meet not less than twice a year and in fact run the country. A control mechanism of this kind might be admissible in a defeated country which had committed grave crimes but not in a peaceful country like Laos. It is clear that if Laos were bound by all these obligations, nothing would in fact be left of her sovereignty.

The Soviet Foreign Minister, A. A. Gromyko, characterised the Western Powers' attitude at the Conference when he said that 'as far as one can see, they regard the International Commission not as a body called upon to protect Laos from foreign interference but, on the contrary, as a lever for such interference...We most distinctly and categorically state that the Soviet Government will not sign an agreement which would assign to the International Commission the role of a state within a state, while the Laotian Government would be reduced to the position of executor of the wishes of that body.'" *(M. Yegorov, "The Geneva Conference on Laos", International Affairs (Moscow), no. 9 (September 1961), pp. 39-44.)*

October-- The Soviet foreign affairs journal International Affairs notes the creation on 31 July of the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA) consisting of Thailand, the Philippines and the Malayan Federation. Its formation, it is stated, is due to the declining prestige of SEATO: Two of its members (Thailand and the Philippines) belong to SEATO, and the Thai Defense Minister, General Kittikachorn, has recently admitted that ASA would have to make up certain shortcomings of the crisis-ridden SEATO alliance. *("Facts and Figures: Association of South-East Asia", International Affairs (Moscow), no. 10 (October 1961), pp. 124-25.)*

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11 October et seq.-- On 11 October, President Kennedy announces that General Maxwell Taylor and the State Department's Walt W. Rostow will head a special mission to South Vietnam to study ways in which the American commitment to that country can best be fulfilled. General Taylor's subsequent report to the President of 3 November contains three sets of recommendations. First, the report deals with the requirements for political, governmental and administrative reform in South Vietnam. Second, it proposes that the United States increase both material aid and advisory support for a broadly conceived counterinsurgency program. Third, it proposes the introduction into South Vietnam of over 10,000 regular American ground troops, with the possibility that as many as six full divisions might be required. Theodore Draper, writing several years later, suggests that Kennedy at the end of 1961 did what Eisenhower had done in 1954: he changed the number but not the "quality" of the advisors. "He ruled out combat missions but gradually increased the number of 'advisors' from about 800 to about 17,000 [at the end of 1963]." By the end of 1964, however, US soldiers were engaged in active combat; their number had increased to 23,000. *(Roger Hilsman, To Move a Nation (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1967), pp. 422-23; Theodore Draper, Abuse of Power (New York: Viking Press, 1967), pp. 51-52, 83.)*

12-14 October-- On 12 October, Chinese Communist Premier Chou En-lai warns that his country "cannot be indifferent to the increasingly grave situation caused by United States imperialism in South Vietnam." On this same day, the Soviet Union says that it is "clear that American plans to send troops to South Viet Nam have another aspect--the Laotian aspect" and that General Maxwell Taylor's trip to South Vietnam is proof of these "openly aggressive" plans. Two days later, North Vietnam protests to the International Control Commission that General Taylor's mission is planned to "intensify United States intervention in South Viet Nam and prepare the way for introducing United States troops." The New China News Agency reports that Ho Chi Minh has met with Mao Tse-tung and Defense Minister Lin Piao in Peking to discuss the situation in South Vietnam. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 108.)*

27 October-- A Peking Review editorial declares that the situation in South Vietnam is "most dangerous and more tense than at any time in the past." After reviewing recent US press commentary concerning the likelihood of American troop increases, Peking states that "[i]t is clear that the U.S. Government is planning to push its intervention in south Viet Nam to a more dangerous stage. The people of Southeast Asia and the peaceloving people of the whole world must exercise the utmost vigilance in this matter..."

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Moreover, at the enlarged Geneva Conference on Laos "Washington has done its best to place Laos by hook or by crook under an international trusteeship operating through an omnipotent international commission. The United States failed in this scheme because of the objections of the majority of the countries attending the conference..." At the same time that it is manuevering to obtain a majority in the future coalition government of Laos, the US is also said to be preparing to resort to armed force to gain its objective. The editorial calls for "an immediate stop to the military provocations of the United States." *("New US Aggressive Designs in South Viet Nam", Peking Review, IV, no. 43 (27 October 1961), pp. 12-13.)*

November-- Pham Van Dong, in an interview with French scholar and correspondent Jean Lacouture, discusses the prospects for reunification:

"Diem's administration is another obstacle in the way of the implementation of the Geneva Agreements and peaceful reunification of Vietnam, since his administration is the instrument of American imperialists, has always sabotaged the implementation of the Geneva Agreements, and has rejected all constructive proposals by the government of the Democratic Republic. The cause of Vietnam's reunification and the interest of peace and security in this region require a government in South Vietnam that would declare itself in favor of the correct implementation of the Geneva Agreements and of consultations between the two zones with a view toward the peaceful unification of the country.

For its part, the government of the Democratic Republic is always disposed to enter into negotiations with a government of the South that is similarly disposed. In the course of such negotiations, all problems concerning peaceful reunification of Vietnam can be resolved, above all the problem of the restoration of normal relations between the two zones. Such a government in South Vietnam can only be a government freed of American domination, and a government practicing the kind of national political independence that respects democratic liberties, in short a government with a broad national base."

He hints that France may be able to play a role in peacemaking: "There are, after all, three kinds of people in the South. The friends of the Americans, such as Diem and others: they have already lost their game. The people: they are with us. The intellectuals and the bourgeoisie: they remain very attached to France. Thus, the solution largely depends on an understanding, between you and us, that would permit joining

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the masses to the intelligentsia and to the middle class in order to establish a democratic rule. Oh, if only Paris would play its role and contribute to peace!" *(Jean Lacouture, Vietnam (New York: Random House, 1966), pp. 39-41.)*

December-- The Soviet foreign affairs journal International Affairs accuses the meeting of SEATO military advisors held in Bangkok in early October of planning to suppress the national liberation movement in Southeast Asia. Part of this plan, it is claimed, involves the use of South Vietnam and Thailand as instruments for subverting Cambodian neutrality and intervening in that country. Specifically, it is noted that Thai Premier Sarit Thanarat recently charged that Cambodia was becoming a "base of Communist aggression against her neighbors." Simultaneously, South Vietnamese and Thai authorities "engineered military provocations" on Cambodia's borders. In response, the Cambodian Government accused South Vietnam of twisting the facts about these incidents in order to "justify possible military interference by SEATO forces or by South Viet-Nam in Cambodia." In answer to Thailand's action, the Cambodian Parliament on 23 October unanimously endorsed the Government's proposal to break off diplomatic relations with that country. *(Y. Alexandrov, "Cambodia: SEATO Provocation", International Affairs (Moscow), no. 12 (December 1961), pp. 91-92.)*

2 December-- Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko and British Foreign Secretary Home, co-chairmen of the 14-nation conference on Laos, declare in a joint statement that the conference is close to reaching an agreement on the international aspects of the settlement of the Laotian problem. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 109.)*

7 December-- In May 1962, the Government of South Vietnam claims capture of a number of VC documents in Ba Xuyen Province. One of these, dated 7 December 1961, is purportedly a directive from the provincial committee of the Lao Dong Party of Ba Xuyen informing its district committees about the creation of a new People's Revolutionary Party. This directive was later to form part of the US State Department's white paper, Aggression From the North, and reads in part:

"In regard to the foundation of the People's Revolutionary Party of South Viet-Nam, the creation of this party is only a matter of strategy; it needs to be explained within the party; and, to deceive the enemy, it is necessary that the new party be given the outward appearance corresponding to

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a division of the party (Lao Dong) into two and the foundation of a new party, so that the enemy cannot use it in his propaganda.

Within the party, it is necessary to explain that the founding of the People's Revolutionary Party has the purpose of isolating the Americans and the Ngo Dinh Diem regime, and to counter their accusations of an invasion of the South by the North. It is means of supporting our sabotage of the Geneva agreement, of advancing the plan of invasion of the South, and at the same time permitting the Front for Liberation of the South to recruit new adherents, and to gain the sympathy of non-alined countries in Southeast Asia.

The People's Revolutionary Party has only the appearance of an independent existence; actually, our party is nothing but the Lao Dong Party of Viet-Nam (Viet-Minh Communist Party), unified from North to South, under the direction of the central executive committee of the party, the chief of which is President Ho...

During these explanations, take care to keep this strictly secret, especially in South Viet-Nam, so that the enemy does not perceive our purpose...

Do not put these explanations in party bulletins..." *(Department of State Publication 7839, Aggression From the North (Washington: GPO, February 1965), p. 57.)*

20 December-- On 18 December, the enlarged Geneva Conference on Laos adopts a declaration and protocol on the neutrality of that country. These documents will come into force upon being signed by a delegation to be sent to the conference by a national coalition government of Laos. On 20 December, the official North Vietnamese organ Nhan Dan comments: "The declaration on neutrality, which the Geneva conference has adopted, is the most important result of the conference...This declaration clearly defines that the conference participants undertake to respect the sovereignty, independence, neutrality, unity, and territorial integrity of Laos, not to interfere in Laotian internal affairs, and not to act directly or indirectly in violation of the sovereignty, independence, neutrality, unity, and territorial integrity of Laos. They undertake to extend aid to Laos without any political conditions attached, and not to drag Laos into alliances that run counter to Laotian neutrality. All agreements that are incompatible with Laotian independence and neutrality will be voided. They also undertake to withdraw foreign troops and military personnel from Laos, and not to set up military bases and posts in Laos, or to use Laotian territory for military purposes. The participants to this

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conference are to exchange their viewpoints in case the independence, sovereignty, and neutrality of Laos are encroached upon, and so forth. These points that were agreed upon (contain?) major principles which had been brought forth by the USSR to the conference 17 May and conform in the main to the spirit of the 1954 Geneva agreements and the Zurich joint communique." With regard to the functioning of the ICC, the United States "was forced to acknowledge that the (declaration?) on the International Commission's duty and authority should be on the basis of the principles of the neutrality declaration, specifically: the International Commission and control teams must have the agreement of the Laotian Government before carrying out their duty, and the objects and locations of such control commissions along with the time of withdrawal of foreign troops and personnel from Laos must be decided upon by the Laotian Government. The protocol also defines the part to be played by the two cochairmen of the Geneva conference and the mode of voting--according to the principle of unanimity—of the International Commision." Not all matters, however, have been settled at Geneva. The commentary notes that an important question remaining to be dealt with is that of SEATO "protection" over Laos. Moreover, problems were arising with the attempts of the neutralist, Communist and right-wing factions to form a coalition government. On 6 October, representatives of these groups had met in Hin Heup and reached an aggreement "according to which Prince Souvanna Phouma was to become the premier of a provisional coalition government consisting of 16 seats distributed as follows: eight for Souvanna, and four each for Prince Souphanouvong and the Savannakhet clique." Since then, however, "the Savannakhet clique, in collusion with the pro-American reactionary forces in Thailand and South Vietnam, [has] perpetrated constant violations of the cease-fire order, and carried out raiding operations encroaching upon liberated areas under government and NLHX control." *("After Seven Months of the Geneva Conference; the Victories and Remaining Problems", Nhan Dan, 20 December 1961, trans. by the Foreign Broadcasts Information Service, Daily Report, 29 December 1961, pp. JJJ 3-5.)*

20 December-- On its first anniversary, the NLF issues a list of "immediate action" demands calling for: "1. Withdrawal of all U.S. military personnel and weapons from South Vietnam and abolition of the Staley Plan.* 2. End to hostilities. 3. Establishment of political freedoms. 4. Release of political

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*The Staley Plan, written in 1961 by a group headed by American economist Eugene Staley, had as its major recommendations increasing the size of the Vietnamese armed forces and launching the strategic-hamlet program.

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prisoners. 5. Dissolution of the National Assembly and election of a new assembly and president. 6. Ending the resettlement program. 7. Solution of Vietnam's economic problems. 8. Establishment of a foreign policy of non-alignment." These "immediate action" demands, it is said, do not supplant the earlier 10-point manifesto but rather constitute a series of interim demands. Note the absence of the theme of reunification, a possible indication of differing views between the NLF and the DRV. Another change from the original manifesto may be noticed in the call for an end to hostilities. *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), pp. 347-48.)*

1962

1962-- A new edition of Truong Chinh's The August Revolution is published in Hanoi. (The original work was written in 1946.) This essay is chiefly of historical significance and is not really a major theoretical or policy statement. Its reissue at this time, however, would seem to be an indication that both Truong Chinh and his arguments in favor of long-term guerrilla warfare (as opposed to "decisive" large-scale encounters) remain in high favor within the Lao Dong Politburo. *(Truong Chinh, The August Revolution, Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962.)*

January-- The People's Revolutionary Party is formally established in order to improve the organization and leadership (under Communist control) of the struggle in the South. Leaflets are circulated among Communist cadres explaining that in order "to fulfill their historic and glorious duty, workers, peasants, and laborers in South Vietnam need a vanguard group serving as a thoroughly revolutionary party. Held during the last days of December 1961, a conference of Marxist-Leninists decided to establish the Vietnamese People's Revolutionary Party. A platform and body of statutes were approved...The immediate task of the People's Revolutionary Party is to unite and lead the working class, the peasantry, the laboring people, and all compatriots in South Vietnam in struggling to overthrow the rule of the imperialists and feudalists...and liberate Vietnam; to set up a broad democratic coalition government that will achieve national independence and democratic freedom, improve the people's living conditions, give land to the tillers, develop industry, trade, culture, and education, bring a comfortable life to all the people, and achieve national reunification by peaceful means and contribute to protecting world peace...The PRP warmly supports the declaration and program of action of the National Liberation Front and volunteers to stand in the Front's ranks...Our Party does not conceal its ultimate objective, which is to achieve socialism and communism. But our Party has not ceased pointing out that the path leading to

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that objective is long and that the objective cannot be achieved in a few years but several score years." The Marxist-Leninist character of the Party is not to be publicly emphasized. Cadres are instructed that "[i]n study sessions inside the Party and in Front groups, Party purposes [i.e. intentions] and slogans and the Party's platform should be discussed and understood. In public sessions, only slogans and the Party declaration—but not the purposes—will be studied." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), pp. 137-41.)*

January-- The official platform of the People's Revolutionary Party is broadcast over Radio Liberation. It is composed of ten points:

"1. We will overthrow the Ngo Dinh Diem government and form a national democratic coalition government.

2. We will carry out a program involving extension of democratic liberties, general amnesty for political detainees, abolition of agrovilles and resettlement centers, abolition of special military tribunal law and other undemocratic laws.

3. We will abolish the economic monopoly of the U.S. and its henchmen, protect domestically made products, promote development of the economy, and allow forced evacuees from North Vietnam to return to their place of birth.

4. We will reduce land rent and prepare for land reform.

5. We will eliminate U.S. cultural enslavement and depravity and build nationalistic progressive culture and education.

6. We will abolish the system of American military advisers and close all foreign military bases in Vietnam.

7. We will establish equality between men and women and among different nationalities and recognize the autonomous rights of the national minorities in the country.

8. We will pursue a foreign policy of peace and will establish diplomatic relations with all countries that respect the independence and sovereignty of Vietnam.

9. We will re-establish normal relations between North and South as a first step toward peaceful reunification of the country.

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10. We will oppose aggressive wars and actively defend world peace." *(Douglas Pike, War, Peace and the Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press), pp. 14-15.)*

January-- The Lao Dong Party Central Committee sends letters to "a number of fraternal parties" (in particular, the Soviets and the Chinese) expressing its concern with the deep divisions within the international Communist movement. It proposes that "a meeting be held between representatives of Communist and workers' parties to settle the discord together and that, pending such a meeting, the parties cease attacking one another in the press and over the radio." *("Text of Statement of the Politburo of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee, February 10, 1963", in P. J. Honey, Communism in North Vietnam (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1963), p. 182.)*

15 January-- US and Soviet negotiators W. Averall Harriman and Georgi M. Pushkin agree that two key posts—Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior—in any new coalition government in Laos should be held by neutralists. The meeting of the two diplomats was brought about by the refusal of Prince Boun Oum, the right-wing Premier of Laos, to agree that these ministries should go to neutralists in a regime headed by Prince Souvanna Phouma, also a neutralist. *(New York Times, 16 January 1962, p. 10.)*

31 January-- Aleksei I. Adzhubei, editor of Izvestia and son-in-law of Nikita Khrushchev, states on a visit to the US that his country hopes for an agreement on Laos and that "it may come very soon." *(New York Times, 1 February 1962, p. 10.)*

16 February-3 March-- At the first regular Congress of the NLF, the themes of unity and the certainty of victory through the General Uprising are stressed. The newly elected chairman, Nguyen Huu Tho notes that "[o]nly with a broad and firmly united bloc, struggling in accordance with a program consistent with the interests of the masses, can we defeat the U.S. imperialists and their followers...A General Uprising of the South Vietnamese people to overthrow the U.S.-Diem regime is natural and inevitable ..." The Congress reiterates the earlier major policies of the Front and establishes a 52-man Central Committee, leaving vacant 21 of these seats. These positions apparently are to serve as bait to attract potential allies. The declaration of the Congress notes that "[t]he congress is of the view that at the present time a number of mass organizations, parties, political groups, and personalities of good will, at home and abroad, do not yet have favorable conditions to contact and join the NLF. The congress has...sincerely called on the mass organizations to seize the earliest opportunity to share actively the responsibility of paramount importance that the people in South Vietnam have

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entrusted to the National Liberation Front." Finally, the Congress issues a statement on the neutralization of Indochina which indicates that the NLF would "continue to respect the Geneva accords and demand that U.S. imperialists stop their armed aggression and withdraw weapons, military advisers, and troops from South Vietnam and give up the bloody Staley, Taylor, and Nolting plans. [We demand] immediate restoration of peace in South Vietnam, halting at once the war against the people...[We propose] carrying out a foreign policy of peace and neutrality..., that [we] set up an Indochina neutral zone, to include South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, but with full sovereignty and independence for all three countries." A hint of willingness to accept a policed inspection is included: "The proposal for a neutral zone comprising South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos is proof of the sincerity and uprightness of the Front's program. Such a zone can be created only with the agreement of neighboring countries, which, as a matter of fact, are concerned with the implementation of obligations freely consented to. Better still, this neutrality, to be valid, should be guaranteed. Then the Front's sincerity would be beyond doubt." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), pp. 350, 363.)*

24 February-- A Chinese Foreign Ministry statement supports a DRV declaration of 18 February condemning US "armed intervention" in South Vietnam. The Chinese statement notes that the number of fully armed US military men in that territory numbers 5,000 and that they have been ordered to shoot back if shot at. In addition, the creaton on 8 February of a US Military Assistance Command, Viet Nam is noted, its functions, it is said, being not merely "assistance" but also the "operational command" of the struggle against the "patriotic forces" in the South. The Foreign Ministry accuses the United States of practicing "special warfare" in Vietnam and states that "if this new war scheme of U.S. imperialism should succeed in southern Viet Nam, not only all peoples striving for freedom and independence will suffer, but the danger of wars of bigger scale will be greatly increased. This is absolutely impermissible." The statement notes that "while the spearhead of U.S. imperialist aggression points directly to the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, it points indirectly to China...The Chinese Government and people cannot but express their grave concern at this." Therefore, the Chinese Government "holds that the Co-Chairmen of the 1954 Geneva Conference and the countries concerned must promptly hold consultations and take appropriate measures to eliminate the serious danger of war in southern Viet Nam by peaceful means, so that the Geneva agreements and the peace of Indo-China can be safeguarded." *("Chinese Foreign Ministry Statement", Peking Review, V, no. 9 (2 March 1962), pp. 6-7.)*

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3 March-- The New York Times reports that Communist China has seized an important propaganda foothold in Laos by setting up a Lao-language radio station that is said to be so powerful that its four hours of news and propaganda are heard more clearly in Vientiane than the capital's own station. The new station identifies itself as Peking radio and is located somewhere in Pathet Lao territory in northeast Laos near the Chinese border. The Times notes that the Soviets have offered to build a station for the rebel regime of Souvanna Phouma but have not yet begun work. *(New York Times, 4 March 1962, p. 18.)*

8 March-- In contrast to the Chinese text of a statement made by NLF representative Huynh Van Tam and broadcast by Peking radio on 16 January, a DRV telegram sent to Peking upon Tam's arrival home emphasizes the goal of neutralization. This issue will continue to be a point of dispute between Peking and the NLF.* *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), pp. 332-33.)*

13 March-- According to The New York Times, Pham Huy Quat, president of the Committee on National Union, which has led the opposition to Diem's regime, has sent a letter to US Ambassador Frederick E. Nolting urging that the United States try to get the Diem Government to liberalize its policies. The Committee claims that Diem has alienated the majority of the Vietnamese people by suppressing individual rights. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 111.)*

17 March-- In Moscow, the Soviet news agency Tass publishes a Ministry note to the signatories of the 1954 Geneva Agreements. The note charges the United States with creating "a serious danger to peace" by its "interference" in South Vietnam in contravention of the Geneva Agreements. It demands immediate withdrawal of US troops. *(Marcus G. Raskin and Bernard B. Fall, eds., The Viet-Nam Reader (New York: Random House, 1965), p. 387.)*

27 March-- President Ho Chi Minh, interviewed by a correspondent of the London Daily Express, declares that, pending Vietnam's reunification, the Government of the DRV estimates that the earnest desire of the entire Vietnamese people is for the normalization

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*See, for instance, the 20 December 1962 misstatement of the NLF program by People's Daily listed later in this compendium. The Chinese, during this period, often noted the NLF goal of neutralization in their statements prepared for foreign ears while ignoring it in materials meant for domestic consumption.

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of relations between North and South Vietnam. Concerning the South Vietnamese situation, the President says: "It is up to the people of South Vietnam to decide whether South Vietnam is to have a neutral regime or any other regime; nobody can go counter to the people's aspirations. The reunification of Vietnam is an internal affair of the Vietnamese people; no other country has a right to interfere with it." Programmatic portions of the interview are as follows:

Question: "Is the DRV ready to agree, with the countries at the 14-nation Geneva conference on Laos, on international guarantees of respect for and defense of the territorial integrity of a neutral South Vietnam with a foreign policy similar to that of India or Cambodia?"

Answer: "The program of the Vietnam Fatherland Front...has answered your question. Among other things, the program says: 'In every respect, historical, geographical, economic, cultural, social, and national, our country is a united country which definitely no force can partition'...but 'today, the social and political situation in the North and that in the South are different. To favorably achieve the reunification of our fatherland by peaceful means, we should take into due consideration the practical situation in both zones, the legitimate interests and aspirations of all sections of the population, and, at the same time, by negotiations, we should arrive at the holding of free general elections in order to achieve unity without any coercion of annexation of one side by the other.'

The program also says: 'A National Assembly is to be elected through free general elections. A central coalition government is to be chosen by the National Assembly. Because of the present situation in both the North and the South, popularly-elected councils and administrative organs with wide powers shall be set up in each locality.' This program is in conformity with the Geneva agreements, which have recognized the sovereignty, independence, unity, and territorial integrity of Vietnam and provided for a political settlement through nationwide free general elections.

The Government of the DRV has time and again proposed to the South Vietnamese authorities that representatives of the two sides should meet together and discuss a settlement by peaceful means..."

Question: "In such circumstances what, in your opinion, will be the relations between the two Vietnams?"

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Answer: "Pending actual reunification of the country, the Government of the DRV has proposed (note of 22 December 1958--VNA) to the South Vietnamese authorities the normalization of the relations between the two zones in the economic and cultural fields, as well as in the fields of movement and correspondence between the two zones, and so forth." *(Foreign Broadcasts Information Service, Daily Report, 28 March 1962, pp. JJJ 1-3.)*

April-- In April, the Central Committee of the People's Revolutionary Party issues what might be termed its foreign policy platform. It vows to pursue the NLF goals of peace, neutralism, independence and unification, denounces the United States for "waging aggressive war" in South Vietnam, thanks the Soviet Union, Communist China, and the bloc nations for supporting its cause, urges all "peace-loving peoples" of the world to support the Vietnamese revolution, calls on the American people to demonstrate opposition to their Government's policy in Vietnam, denounces the British Government for its stand on Vietnam, and hints that unless the Americans leave Vietnam, it would call on the DRV, China, and the Soviet Union to come to its aid. *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), pp. 141-42.)*

27 April-- Peking's People's Daily (Jenmin Jih Pao) reports a "serious warning" issued to the "US aggressors" by the Chinese Foreign Ministry. The previous day, it is stated, a US warship had twice intruded into China's territorial waters around the Hsisha Islands. This is the 200th "serious warning" issued by the Foreign Ministry against such "military provocations". Such aggressive actions, the People's Daily editorial states, are "inseparable from the U.S. policy of intensifying its aggression and war throughout Asia." Taking note of joint US-allied military maneuvers conducted during March and April throughout much of the Far East, the Chinese claim that this represents just one more example of the US policy of "making Asians fight Asians." *("Serious Warning to U.S. Aggressors", Peking Review, V, no. 18 (4 May 1962), pp. 12-14.)*

May-- The Soviets accuse the United States of obstructing a peaceful settlement in Laos by continuing to give military support to the right-wing forces of Phoumi Nosavan even though he recently announced that he opposed the formation of a Government of National Unity. US attempts to exert pressure on Phoumi Nosavan are described as pretense and show, aimed at deceiving public opinion. *(D. Yakovlev, "Laos: A Legitimate Question", International Affairs (Moscow), no. 5 (May 1962), pp. 74-75.)*

3-12 May-- On 3 May, the Pathet Lao launch an offensive with about four battalions and with the support of two additional battalions of Vietminh troops in northwestern Laos. On 6 May, the

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Communists capture Nam Tha, the northwestern provincial capital, and on 12 May the commander of the Royal Laotian Army flees across the Mekong into Thailand with 2,000 troops and seven US military advisers. On 6 May, The New York Times reports that President Kennedy and his advisers feel that the Laotian Government has provoked the attack by reinforcing Nam Tha against the advice of American officials. On 7 May, the State Department announces that the United States and Great Britain have been in consultation and have begun "an immediate effort to have the cease-fire re-established." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), pp. 111-12.)*

15 May-- The Government of Thailand issues a statement that the Pathet Lao/Vietminh seizures of Muong Sing and Nam Tha in deliberate and flagrant violation of the cease-fire in Laos have pushed Communist forces toward the Thai border. The US and Thai governments have accordingly agreed "that some units of the United States forces be stationed in Thailand for the purpose of cooperating with the Thai Armed Forces in defending and preserving the peace and security of the Kingdom of Thailand against the threat of the pro-Communist troops which are presently approaching the Thai territory." *(US Department of State, American Foreign Policy, Current Documents, 1962 (Washington: GPO, 1966), p. 1093.)*

15 May-- The Soviets declare that the United States is taking a "dangerous step" in preparing for possible military intervention in Laos. Pravda, the official newspaper of the Communist Party, asserts that "saber-rattling and preparations for aggression were of little help to peaceful diplomatic negotiations." Describing the staging operations of US troops in Thailand, Pravda charges that the US is bent on employing all means to save the "rotten regime" of Prince Boun Oum: "The United States leaders, therefore, are taking a new dangerous step that is fraught with serious consequences." In another commentary, the armed forces newspaper, Krasnaya Zvezda, says that "[a]n armed interference of the United States in Laos would have such serious consequences for the cause of peace that it is even difficult to foresee them." Neither article discusses whether the USSR is contemplating immediate counter-measures. Both commentaries are, in general, rather moderate in tone and reflect the restrained attitude displayed by Soviet officials in private conversations. These officials have sought to justify the advance of the Pathet Lao as an expression of impatience with what they describe as the stalling tactics of Boun Oum. Neither US nor British ambassadors, however, have been able to obtain any commitment from the Soviet Government to intervene to halt the Pathet Lao offensive. *(New York Times, 16 May 1962, p. 13.)*

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16 May-- Peking's People's Daily accuses the United States of seeking to extend the Laotian conflict by sending a task force of the Seventh Fleet to the area, "ready for entry into Laos at any time." Thus, the peaceful settlement of the dispute is likely to be made impossible. Such a situation, it states, "calls for high vigilance." The newspaper also accuses the US of using "remnant Chiang Kai-shek brigands" to extend the fighting in Laos. It notes that "this is a very serious situation." *(New York Times, 17 May 1962, p. 16.)*

18-19 May-- On 18 May, Soviet Premier Khrushchev calls the US military action in Thailand "imprudent". He says: "President Kennedy has sent his troops into Thailand, but that will avail him nothing. The Americans will not be able to hold Viet Nam and Laos because they are only uniting themselves with the feudal lords." On the following day, Peking radio states: "China can absolutely not permit the establishment of a new military bridgehead aimed against her in an area near the Chinese border." The broadcast charges that the United States is attempting to turn the Laotian civil war into a general conflict to subjugate all of Southeast Asia. *(CQ Quarterly, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 112.)*

20 May-- The Soviet newspaper Pravda links for the first time the current Washington talks on Berlin between Secretary Rusk and Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin to the crisis in Laos. It condemns the United States for "preparing for intervention in Laos" while negotiating with the Soviets. It warns that the Soviet Union will not back down before any show of force. US intervention in Laos, it is stated, "would certainly widen the military conflict and enhance the danger of war not only on the borders of Laos but also in the whole of Southeast Asia." The article continues: "In that case the military intervention of the United States in Laos would turn into a collective intervention and would inevitably provoke a counteraction by the other side." *(New York Times, 21 May 1962, pp. 1 and 7.)*

24 May-- Until 1962, the NLF attitude towards the International Control Commission was reasonably favorable. When the ICC began to direct its attention to VC activities in South Vietnam, however, the Front's tone changed sharply. An NLF statement issued in May declares: "The South Vietnamese people will not recognize any partial and erroneous conclusions reached by the majority votes of the ICC...It is regrettable that the ICC has, in many cases, drawn unscrupulous and nonimpartial conclusions... busying itself with the so-called subversive and aggressive activities of North Vietnam, a product of the imagination and slander." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 472.)*

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26 May-- The Pathet Lao launch another offensive in southern and northwestern Laos in what US military advisers describe as a "concentrated assault" let by North Vietnamese units. It is reported that Royal Laotian forces have again been forced to retreat into Thailand. In Washington this same day Kennedy administration spokesmen state that American officials have reproached Laotian Government leaders for refusing to negotiate with the Pathet Lao and the neutralists on the formation of a coalition government, for supplying Nam Tha despite warnings to the contrary, and for neglecting the serious military situation. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 112.)*

June-- The Soviet journal International Affairs discusses the problems and prospects of US alliance policy in the Far East. It claims that such policy is not substantively different from that of John Foster Dulles—it is merely more subtle. American intervention has created such discontent in the area, however, that even its SEATO allies are rebelling. Thus, Washington has been forced to seek new political and military arrangements. With SEATO in a state of "chronic crisis", Japan has become the "chief agent" of the US in Asia. Not only has America encouraged Japanese economic and political penetration into the area, but a new military bloc, the North-East Asia Treaty Organization (NEATO), composed of Taiwan, South Korea and Japan, has long been in the making. Eventually, it has been suggested, this bloc would merge with SEATO. International Affairs describes the increasingly close political, economic and military ties between these three countries and notes that the main factor standing in the way of such "schemes" is the mounting resistance on the part of the peoples of those countries to the US policy of militarization. The article concludes: "Failure dogs the U.S. imperialists in Asia, insofar as their policy is opposed to the people's liberation movement. The United States is in a dangerous dead-end and will not be able to get out of it, unless it abandons its adventurist policies. For the time being, however, elements who are by no means distinguished by sanity of thought exert the more visible influence on U.S. policy, among others, those who call for an end to 'half-measures' and want to throw the armed might of the United States behind its efforts 'to retain South-East Asia.'" *(M. Markov, "SEATO's Future and the NEATO Project", International Affairs (Moscow), no. 6 (June 1962), pp. 56-62.)*

2 June-- A Special Report of the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Vietnam is issued. The Polish delegation dissents from the views expressed therein concerning "subversive activities" in South Vietnam, which it says have no relevance to the Geneva Agreement. The ICC (with Poland dissenting)

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nevertheless has come to the conclusion "that there is evidence to show that the PAVN has allowed the Zone in the North to be used for inciting, encouraging and supporting hostile activities in the Zone in the South, aimed at the overthrow of the Administration in the South." The report further states that the ICC has received a letter from the Liaison Mission of the Republic of Vietnam dated 9 December 1961 which declares that because of aggression the GVN has asked the United States to intensify its aid in both personnel and materiel. The Commission further concludes that the increased US aid and the establishment of a US Military Assistance Command in Vietnam are in violation of the Geneva Agreement. It states: "Fundamental provisions of the Geneva Agreement have been violated by both Parties, resulting in ever-increasing tension and threat of resumption of open hostilities. In this situation, the role of the Commission for the maintenance of peace in Viet-Nam is being greatly hampered because of denial of co-operation by both the Parties." The ICC asks the Geneva co-chairmen to take action in order to insure the maintenance of the Geneva Agreement. *(US Department of State, American Foreign Policy, Current Documents, 1962 (Washington: GPO, 1966), pp. 1103-06.)*

ca. June-- Nguyen Huu Tho, for the Central Committee of the National Liberation Front, replies to the ICC charges of 2 June: "The National Liberation Front of South Vietnam Central Committee formally declares that this conclusion is completely contrary to the truth, unlawful, and dangerous...We request [the Commission] reject this erroneous, illegal, and completely invalid conclusion of the Indian and Canadian delegates..." From this point on, the NLF rapidly began to lose interest in the Commission. After mid-1963, the Front virtually ignored that organization. *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 472.)*

10 June-- At a Peking banquet honoring Kong Le, Chinese Communist Deputy Premier Ho Lung denounces the United States for attempting to turn Laos into a "base for aggression against China." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 113.)*

11 June-- Foreign Minister Chen Yi says that China sincerely hopes that the three Laotian princes would "achieve positive results and succeed in forming a national union Government." Speaking at a reception in Peking for Nepal's King Mahendra, Marshal Chen expresses the belief that "all foreign intervention schemes can be defeated, a Laotian national union government formed and the Laotian question peacefully settled." *(New York Times, 12 June 1962, p. 14.)*

11 June-- Prince Souvanna Phouma announces that Prince Boun Oum and Prince Souphanouvong have joined him in signing an agreement

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establishing a coalition cabinet to rule Laos. Of the 19 cabinet members, 11 are to be neutralists, 4 rightists, and 4 Pathet Lao. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 113.)*

12 June-- Chou En-lai greets the formation of the new Laotian regime. In a message to Souvanna Phouma, head of the new Government, the Chinese Prime Minister states that "[t]his is an important step in the peaceful settlement of the Laotian question and a major victory of the Laotian people" and says that he is deeply convinced that it would "further strengthen friendly Chinese-Laotian relations." *(New York Times, 13 June 1962, p. 3.)*

12 June-- Soviet Premier Khrushchev writes a letter to President Kennedy which reports "good news" from Laos, namely that the three political forces have found it possible to form a coalition government of national unity headed by Prince Souvanna Phouma. Khrushchev declares that it will now be possible for the Geneva Conference to move to a peaceful settlement of the Laotian problem which will constitute a good basis for the development of Laos as a neutral and independent state. He suggests that the Laotian agreement could serve as a guide to the solution of other problems between the West and the Soviet bloc. *(Richard P. Stebbins, ed., Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1962 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1963), p. 283.)*

12 June-- In response to a message from Khrushchev dated 12 June which states that reports from Laos are encouraging, President Kennedy agrees that the formation of a Government of National Union under Prince Souvanna Phouma marks a milestone in efforts to neutralize Laos. He desires to push forward at Geneva to complete agreements. He adds: "If together we can help in the establishment of an independent and neutral Laos, securely sustained in this status through time, this accomplishment will surely have a significant and positive effect far beyond the borders of Laos." *(Public Papers of the Presidents, John F. Kennedy, 1962 (Washington: GPO, 1963), pp. 479-80.)*

22 June-- In Laos the new coalition government is formally installed with Souvanna Phouma as Prime Minister. He declares that the coalition is "resolved to follow the way of peace and neutrality in conformity with the interests...of the Laotian people." He adds that the Government is pledged "not to permit the establishment of any foreign military base on Laotian territory and not to permit any country to use Laotian territory for military means." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 114.)*

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22 June-- Peking's People's Daily states that the Chinese people fully support the patriotic struggle in South Vietnam. The "united patriotic forces of the people" are growing in strength and will eventually defeat the US "special warfare" plans for "armed intervention". The editorial accuses the US of sending troops to Thailand in order to use that country as a "military bridgehead" against Southeast Asia. Its statement of intention is noncommittal and relatively mild, saying only that such action "is a serious threat to peace in Asia and the world. The Chinese people, together with the Vietnamese people, the people of the rest of Asia and the rest of the world, will firmly oppose the activities of the United States designed to invade Asia and its interference in the internal affairs of other countries." *("The Vietnamese People Will Triumph", Peking Review, V, no. 25 (4 May 1962), pp. 10-11.)*

July-- In a report to the Fourth Session of the Second National Assembly of the DRV, Nguyen Van Vinh, Chairman of the Committee for the Reunification of Vietnam, describes the situation in the South as "extremely grave". The United States, he says, has adopted a "forward strategy" designed to capture the initiative from the "patriotic forces". The war can no longer be considered "small" or local". Over 6,500 US servicemen are in South Vietnam "operating jointly with nine 'local' infantry divisions, an air force, and naval and tank brigades, to which should be added 100,000 men in the police and home guard. Altogether, about 400,000 men are fighting the patriots of South Viet-Nam." Moreover, the Americans have instituted a "strategic hamlet" program designed to crush the national liberation movement within 18 months. Vinh describes this program as "resettling the population in camps fenced with barbed wire." Instead of defeating the patriotic movement, he states, the "strategic hamlet" program is having the effect of expanding it. The forms of resistance "are becoming increasingly varied, and the struggle ever more bitter. Political struggle is combined with armed warfare." Many of the "strategic hamlets" have been "turned into 'self-defense' hamlets under the control of the people." The struggle is spreading into urban areas as well, particularly among workers, intellectuals and students. Moreover, "[s]ince the beginning of the year, almost 5,000 South Vietnamese soldiers went over to the people's side with their weapons, and there have been 20 cases of mass defection, when whole units have gone over." Vinh claims that the US is already planning to extend the war for 5-10 more years. This, he says, is a symptom of its failure. Vinh gives thanks to the countries of the socialist camp, which have "declared their resolute support for the just struggle of our whole people." In closing, he asks the co-chairmen of the Geneva Conference and the members of the ICC "urgently to find effective measures to ensure

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the correct and complete fulfillment of these [Geneva] agreements" and warns the United States that if it continues to violate these Accords it will have to bear full responsibility for its "acts and their grave consequences." *(Nguyen Van Vinh, "Undeclared War", International Affairs (Moscow), no. 7 (July 1962), pp. 86-89.)*

July-- In an interview with Pham Van Dong, Bernard Fall is able to uncover a number of provocative statements as to the DRV attitude towards key issues such as reunification, negotiation with the Diem Government, contacts with Western countries and aid to the revolutionaries in the South:

FALL: "Mr. Prime Minister, President Ho Chi Minh made a declaration to the Daily Express [London] in March, 1962, referring to the conditions under which North Viet-Nam would negotiate a settlement with the South. Has anything happened in the meantime that would change those conditions?"

PHAM: "Our position has remained largely unchanged since President Ho Chi Minh's declaration. What has changed, however, is the extent of American intervention...

The real enemy is American intervention. It is of little importance who the American agent in Viet-Nam might be."

FALL: "Mr. Prime Minister, the International Control Commission...has recently accused the North Vietnamese Republic of aiding and abetting the South Vietnamese rebellion. What do you think of that accusation?"

PHAM (*deprecating gesture*): "We understand under what outside pressures the [Indian and Canadian] members of the ICC labor. After all, India does depend for development upon large-scale American aid."

FALL: "But would it not at least be conceivable that some of the almost 100,000 South Vietnamese who went north [of the 17th parallel] in 1954, and whose relatives are now fighting against South Vietnamese forces, would attempt to slip across your border back into South Viet-Nam in order to help their relatives—even without the permission of the North Vietnamese government? Wouldn't that be at least conceivable?"

PHAM: "Sir, in our country one does not cross borders without permission."

FALL: "Would not a spreading of the guerrilla war entail a real risk of American reaction against North Vietnamese territory? You have been to North Korea last year, Mr. Prime Minister; you saw what American bombers can do..."

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PHAM (*very seriously*): "We fully realize that the American imperialists wish to provoke a situation in the course of which they could use the heroic struggle of the South Vietnamese people as a pretext for the destruction of our economic and cultural achievements.

We shall offer them no pretext that could give rise to an American military intervention against North Viet-Nam."

Dr. Fall and Premier Dong are joined by President Ho Chi Minh:

PHAM: "Dr. Fall is interested in the present situation in South Viet-Nam..."

FALL: "Yes, Mr. President, how do you evaluate the situation in South Viet-Nam?"

HO: "Ngo Dinh Diem is in a very difficult position right now and it is not likely to improve in the future. He has no popular support."

FALL: "But would you negotiate with South Viet-Nam?"

PHAM: "The situation is not yet ripe for a real negotiation. They [the South Vietnamese] don't really want to negotiate."

HO: "That is absolutely true. They are showing no intention to negotiate."

FALL: "But are you not afraid that the situation might degenerate into a protracted war?"

HO (*earnestly, turning full face*): "Sir, you have studied us for ten years, you have written about the Indochina War. It took us eight years of bitter fighting to defeat you French in Indochina. Now the Diem regime is well armed and helped by many Americans. The Americans are stronger than the French. It might perhaps take ten years, but our heroic compatriots in the South will defeat them in the end. We shall marshal world public opinion about this unjust war against the South Vietnamese people."

PHAM: "Yes, the heroic South Vietnamese people will have to continue the struggle by their own means, but we watch its efforts with the greatest sympathy."

HO: "I think the Americans greatly underestimate the determination of the Vietnamese people. The Vietnamese people have always show great determination when faced with an invader."

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FALL: "But are you still willing to come to a negotiated settlement if the occasion presented itself?"

HO: "Yes, but only with people who are willing to sit down with us at one and the same table and 'talk' [*causer*]."

FALL: "You mean you would negotiate with any South Vietnamese government?"

HO: "Yes, with any."

FALL: "But what kind of relations would you envisage?"

HO: "Of whatever type they [South Vietnamese] wish. After all, the East and West Germans have flourishing trade relations in spite of the Berlin Wall, haven't they?" (After further amenities, Ho leaves.)

FALL: "Mr. Prime Minister, what do you think of Ngo Dinh Diem's personal position as of right now?"

PHAM: "It is quite difficult. He is unpopular, and the more unpopular he is, the more American aid he will need to remain in power. And the more American aid he gets, the more of an American puppet he'll look and the less likely he is to regain popularity."

FALL: "That sounds pretty much like a vicious circle, doesn't it?"

PHAM (*a humorous gleam in his eye*): "No, sir. It is a descending spiral."

FALL: "But you must understand, Mr. Prime Minister, that South Viet-Nam is in a different situation from the non-Communist parts of Germany and Korea. In the latter two cases, the non-Communist part is by far the more populated, whereas in the case of Viet-Nam, the non-Communist part has 13.8 million people against your 17 million. You can clearly see that they have good reason to fear North Viet-Nam, which also has the larger army, and one with a fearsome reputation, as we French well know."

PHAM: "Certainly, we realize that we are in the stronger position. Thus, we are also willing to give all the guarantees necessary for the South to be able to come out fairly [*pour que le Sud trouve son compte*] in such a negotiation.

You will recall President Ho's declaration with regard to maintaining the South's separate government and economic system.

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The Fatherland Front embodies those points in its program, and the South Vietnamese Liberation Front likewise.

We do not envisage an immediate reunification and are willing to accept the verdict of the South Vietnamese people with regard to the institutions and policies of its part of the country."

FALL: "What, then, would be the minimal conditions under which the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam would accept a settlement of the conflict which at present exists in South Viet-Nam?"

(*Pham makes a statement, as below.*)

FALL: "Would you object to my making a tape recording of that answer? It is a reply that I would like to have verbatim, if possible."

(*Pham thinks it over, makes notes, agrees.*)

PHAM: "This is a very timely question: The D.R.V.N. Government has made some sufficiently explicit declarations on the subject [but] let me underline what follows: The underlying origin and immediate cause of the extremely dangerous situation in the South of our country is the armed intervention of the United States and the fascist dictatorship of Ngo Dinh Diem, the creation and instrument of that intervention.

It is obvious, then, that in order to normalize the situation in our whole country, those factors of dissension must disappear. We support with determination the patriotic struggle of our Southern compatriots and the objectives of their struggle —I mean, the program of the Southern Liberation Front.

We are certain that the massive help of all classes of South [Vietnam's] society and the active support of the peoples of the world shall determine the happy outcome of the dangerous situation that exists in the South of our country.

The people of Viet-Nam and the D.R.V.N. Government remain faithful to the Geneva Agreements which establish our basic national rights. We shall continue to cooperate with the International Control Commission on the basis of those agreements, and hope that this cooperation shall be fruitful—providing that all members of the Commission respect the agreements."

FALL: "Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister, for that statement."

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PHAM: "I would like to say something about a remark you made in your book on our Republic about our alleged 'isolationism' from neutral and pro-Western countries and from international organizations. No, no, and no, we are not isolationists! On the contrary, we seek 'open windows' toward any country or organization that will deal with us on a matter-of-fact basis. We are willing to trade with them and make purchases from them." *(Bernard Fall, "Talk With Ho Chi Minh", The New Republic, 12 October 1963, in Bernard Fall, Ho Chi Minh on Revolution (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967), pp. 320-24.)*

July-- With the massive increase in US aid and the introduction of the GVN strategic hamlet program, notes of pessimism begin to appear in NLF statements. A Central Committee memorandum speaks of "a period of temporary difficulties for the Revolution," caused by "the Americans...who are attempting to overcome the weakness of the Diem troops...Their efforts have created a number of difficulties for the people's liberation movement so that at the moment a seesaw struggle of equilibrium exists between them and the Vietnamese people... The basic approach and direction of the Revolution will not change, but owing to the American interventionists certain aspects are now somewhat changed." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 159.)*

1 July-- The US Department of Defense announces that President Kennedy has ordered withdrawal of 1,000 Marines from Thailand. Withdrawal of the final 3,000 US troops is announced by the State Department on 9 October. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 114.)*

2 July-- The new Laotian coalition government gives tentative approval to a Soviet offer of $600,000 in aid and decides to recognize, in conformity with its neutralist status, five Communist countries—China, Poland, Czechoslovakia, North Vietnam and East Germany. Acting Premier Souphanouvong indicates that the new regime will accept "unconditional aid" from all countries and announces that American prisoners held by the Pathet Lao will be released shortly after a formal settlement is reached at Geneva. *(New York Times, 3 July 1962, p. 2.)*

3 July-- Acting Laotian Premier Souphanouvong at a news conference in Vientiane calls for the withdrawal of foreign troops from neighboring Thailand and charges that United States planes are dropping arms to the Meo tribesmen who oppose his Pathet Lao forces. This same day, a US Defense Department spokesman denies these charges. *(New York Times, 4 July 1962, p. 3.)*

12 July-- Peking radio broadcasts remarks made by Foreign Minister Chen Yi at a North Korean Embassy reception. Marshal Chen

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declares that the United States should understand that an attack against any Communist country constitutes an attack against all Communist countries. Specifically, with regard to Laos: "It is disturbing that the United States, while maintaining its troops along the Mekong River [in Thailand] to apply military pressure, is playing all kinds of tricks in an attempt to achieve its aim of interfering in the internal affairs of Laos...Whether the United States is willing to remove the new obstacles it has set will be the minimum test for its sincerity with regard to a peaceful settlement of the Laotian question." *(New York Times, 13 July 1962, p. 4.)*

20 July-- On the anniversary of the signing of the Geneva Agreements, the NLF issues a "four-point manifesto":

"1. The U.S. government must end its armed aggression against South Vietnam, abolish its military command, withdraw all its troops and personnel, as well as the troops and personnel of U.S. satellites and allies, and withdraw all weapons and other war equipment from South Vietnam.

2. Concerned parties in South Vietnam must stop the war, re-establish peace, and establish conditions throughout South Vietnam to enable the South Vietnamese to solve their own internal affairs. The South Vietnam authority [that is, government] must end its terror operations.

3. There must be established a national coalition government, to include representatives of all political parties, cliques, groups, all political tendencies, social strata, members of all religions. This government must guarantee peace. It must organize free general elections in South Vietnam to choose a democratic National Assembly that will carry out the urgently needed policies. It must promulgate democratic liberties to all political parties, groups, religions; it must release all political prisoners, abolish all internment camps and all other forms of concentration [camps], and stop the forced draft of soldiers and the military training of youth, women, public servants, and students. It must carry out economic policies aimed at safeguarding free enterprise, economic independence. It must abolish monopolies and improve the living conditions of all people.

4. South Vietnam must carry out a foreign policy of peace and neutrality. It must establish friendly relations with all nations, especially with her neighbors. It

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> must not enter any military bloc or agree to let any country establish military bases on her soil. It must accept aid from all countries [if] free of political conditions. A necessary international agreement must be signed in which the big powers of all blocs pledge to respect the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, and neutrality of South Vietnam. South Vietnam, together with Cambodia and Laos, will form a neutral area, all three countries retaining full sovereignty."

A new theme suggested by the manifesto, replacing the hint of policed neutralism set forth at the first regular Congress of the NLF, is the concept that the South Vietnamese should settle their own problems: "The Central Committee of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam believes that in the spirit of Vietnamese dealing with Vietnamese solving their own internal affairs, with the determination to put the Fatherland's interest above all else, the forces that oppose U.S. imperialism in South Vietnam will, through mutual concessions, be able to reach a common agreement for united action to serve the people." While previous Front statements had implied that the NLF must dominate any coalition government that might be formed, this statement declares that the "National Liberation Front of South Vietnam is ready to collaborate on an equal basis with all forces, parties, cliques, groups, associations, and individuals to oppose the aggressive war of U.S. imperialism in South Vietnam, even if these forces do not completely approve of the basic principles of the National Liberation Front. This extends to forces existing inside the country or abroad and even to those who in the past have collaborated with the U.S. imperialists but who now oppose such imperialism. It extends to those political, cultural, social, and professional groups or armed organizations that heretofore have opposed the Revolution in South Vietnam, or are still part of the South Vietnam government or army, but now seek to rise to save the country. The National Liberation Front wishes to contact all these forces to exchange ideas, seeking a mutual understanding of viewpoints, and to discuss concrete methods to save the country. The basis for negotiations will be the above policies or specific parts of these policies." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), pp. 350-51, 361.)*

20 July-- In this period, Soviet statements of support for the Vietnamese revolutionaries remain cautious and non-committal.* Radio Moscow broadcasts to Vietnam: "From the distant capital of Moscow, the Soviet people's powerful voice flies to South

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*NLF praise for Soviet assistance was similarly bland.

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Vietnam. They always sympathize with and follow the struggle of their distant brothers in South Vietnam. The Soviet government resolutely condemns U.S. intervention and demands that the United States stop its acts of interference in South Vietnam's internal affairs." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 341.)*

21 July-- At the final session of the 14-nation conference on Laos, Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko "welcomes the agreements reached on the Laotian question." He notes that "it must be recalled that the favorable turn toward businesslike negotiations at the conference on Laos is connected first of all, to the results of the meeting of N. S. Khrushchev, Chairman of the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers, and U.S. President J. Kennedy in June 1961. The mutual understanding concerning support for an independent and neutral Laos, headed by a government elected by the Laotians themselves, that was attained at this meeting cleared the way for the successful outcome of the conference. The example of Laos, as N. S. Khrushchev, head of the Soviet government, recently said, shows that where the desire for agreement exists, ways for the peaceful settlement of complex international problems can be found...Henceforth the participants in the conference are faced with the task of putting into effect the agreements on Laos. The successful implementation of these agreements will depend on how closely the participants in the conference abide by the solemn pledges they have assumed at the conference. The experience of the fulfillment of the 1954 Geneva agreements makes it necessary to pay special attention to this. Each of us is fully aware that the conclusion of the Geneva agreements on Laos is by no means the final but only the first, albeit the most important, stage in erecting the edifice of a truly independent and neutral Laos. The peoples are entitled to expect the countries participating in the Geneva conference to set an example not only in overcoming difficulties on the road to mutually acceptable agreements but also in implementing these agreements." *("Example of Peaceful Settlement-Geneva Conference on Laos Successfully Completes Its Work", trans. DES, Pravda, 22 July 1962, p. 4.)*

23 July-- The International Conference on the Settlement of the Laotian Question issues a Declaration on the Neutrality of Laos. The declaration is accepted by Burma, Cambodia, Canada, Communist China, North Vietnam, France, India, Poland, Republic of Vietnam, Thailand, USSR, United Kingdom, and United States. It accepts a statement of neutrality issued on 9 July 1962 by the Royal Government of Laos. Furthermore, the signatories agree that: "(a) they will not commit or participate in any way in any act which might directly or indirectly impair the sovereignty, independence, neutrality, unity or territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Laos; (b) they will not resort to the use or threat of force or any other measures which might

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impair the peace of the Kingdom of Laos; (c) they will refrain from all direct or indirect interference in the internal affairs of the Kingdom of Laos; (d) they will not attach conditions of a political nature to any assistance which they may offer or which the Kingdom of Laos may seek; (e) they will not bring the Kingdom of Laos in any way into any military alliance or any other agreement, whether military or otherwise, which is inconsistent with her neutrality, nor invite or encourage her to enter into any such alliance or to conclude any such agreement; (f) they will respect the wish of the Kingdom of Laos not to recognize the protection of any alliance or military coalition, including SEATO; (g) they will not introduce into the Kingdom of Laos foreign troops or military personnel in any form whatsoever, nor will they in any way facilitate or connive at the introduction of any foreign troops or military personnel; (h) they will not establish nor will they in any way facilitate or connive at the establishment in the Kingdom of Laos of any foreign military base, foreign strong point or other foreign military installation of any kind; (i) they will not use the territory of the Kingdom of Laos for interference in the internal affairs of other countries; (j) they will not use the territory of any country, including their own, for interference in the internal affairs of the Kingdom of Laos." *(Richard P. Stebbins, ed., Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1962 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1963), pp. 284-94.)*

23 July-- The Protocol to the Declaration on the Neutrality of Laos, issued by the International Conference on the Settlement of the Laotian Question at Geneva, provides for implementation of the "Declaration" issued this same day. It establishes the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Laos, comprised of representatives of Canada, India, and Poland, with the representative of India as chairman. In making decisions on all matters regarding foreign forces in Laos, the ICC must act unanimously. On other questions, including procedural issues, decisions are to be made on the basis of a majority vote. The protocol provides: "All foreign regular and irregular troops, foreign para-military formations and foreign military personnel shall be withdrawn from Laos in the shortest time possible...The introduction of foreign regular and irregular troops, foreign para-military formations and foreign military personnel into Laos is prohibited." If the Laotian Government deems it necessary, the French Government may leave in Laos for a limited time a precisely restricted number of military instructors for the purpose of training the armed forces of Laos. It is further provided: "The introduction into Laos of armaments, munitions and war material generally, except such quantities of conventional armaments as the Royal Government of Laos may consider necessary for the national

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defense of Laos, is prohibited." *(Richard P. Stebbins, ed., Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1962 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1963), pp. 288-94.)*

23 July-- The Soviet journal International Affairs in retrospect discusses the Geneva negotiations on Laos. It notes that since 1954 there has been a "radical change in the balance of forces in Laos." This shift was reflected in the outcome of the Geneva negotiations where the attempts of the right-wing representatives to drag out the discussions and build up their military forces were soundly defeated. On the basis of the events which transpired both at the Conference and on the battlefield in Laos, it is "clear that the victory of the internal national patriotic forces was the principal factor which determined the success of the Geneva Conference...It is quite safe to say that the Conference merely gave the legal form to what the Laotian people had won in the course of a long war." At Geneva, the major problem of conflicting East-West approaches had to be resolved:

"The Soviet Union, in agreement with the other Socialist countries, put forward a plan for the peaceful settlement of the Laotian question, which may with good reason be regarded as a collective product of all the Socialist countries attending the Conference...

The delegations of the Socialist countries proceeded from the fact that the problems involved should be divided into two groups: international and internal. They also believed that a line of distinction had to be clearly drawn between them.

International questions should be discussed at the Conference, whereas the internal questions, such as the formation of a Government of national unity, reorganisation of the national army, elections, etc., had to be entirely within the competence of the Laotians themselves. Discussion of such questions at an international conference would be tantamount to rude interference in the internal affairs of Laos.

Although no direct objections to this principle were raised at the Conference, it was systematically violated by the Western Powers, especially the U.S.A., which again and again brought up matters relating to internal Laotian affairs.

...It was the task of the Conference, in the opinion of the Socialist countries, to create the external conditions which would help Laos to protect itself against interference from outside and ensure its development in conformity with the requirements and interests of its people.

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This line of the Socialist countries was opposed by the line of the U.S.A. and its allies, which may be described as a desire to impose a solution keeping Laos within the Western sphere of influence, and allowing the Western Powers to interfere in its internal affairs and preventing its development as an independent democratic state.

This difference of approach was apparent throughout the entire Conference. The struggle between the two lines expressed the main content of the Geneva Conference from start to finish."

In addition to the problem of the correct general approach to negotiations, a number of specific questions arose:

"The most important among these was the neutrality of Laos. It appeared at first glance that the conferees had reached an understanding that Laos was to be neutral. In fact, the Government of Laos had declared at the 1954 Geneva Conference that neutrality was the basis of its foreign policy. But its neutrality had been violated. In view of this the delegations of the Socialist countries worked for measures to strengthen the neutrality of Laos with the strictest observance of its sovereign rights. They proposed a Declaration on the Neutrality which would include, on the one hand, a commitment on the part of Laos to a policy of neutrality, non-participation in military blocs, and rejection of military bases on its territory, and, on the other, commitments by the participating Powers to respect and observe its neutrality, independence and territorial integrity and to refrain from taking any steps directly or indirectly affecting its sovereignty or leading to a violation of peace in the country.

The Western delegations took a different view of the neutrality of Laos and the commitments of the participating countries. Rusk said at the Conference on May 17, 1961, that "a definition of the concept of neutrality, as it applies to Laos...must go beyond the classical concept of non-alignment and include positive assurance of the integrity of the elements of national life." He added that in his opinion the neutrality of Laos must include guarantees against the subversive activity of elements inside the country. This formula was then concretised, and subsequently the American delegates joined by some of their Western allies moved forward the idea of what they called "controlled neutrality."

It is perfectly obvious that no self-respecting country could accept a status of neutrality in essence signifying violation of the people's sovereign rights and authorising the Western

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Powers to interfere in its internal affairs and block any internal changes. This approach gave expression to the colonialist nature of U.S. policy in respect of the underdeveloped countries in general and Laos in particular...

The Socialist countries resolutely opposed the U.S. concept of neutrality and the very idea of establishing control of any kind over the neutrality of Laos. They were firmly supported by the neutralist countries, which realized how dangerous the Western posture was for them.

On the question of neutrality the Western Powers tried to upset the key principle, namely, that Laotian neutrality was a government policy freely adopted. Until the very last day the U.S.A. and Britain tried to influence the content of the Laotian Government's Declaration by including in it Laotian commitments on internal matters which did not fall within the ambit of the Conference...

There was also a different approach to international control in Laos. The West wanted an excessive extension of the functions and powers of the International Commission, its free access to all establishments, all documents of the Laotian Government and all points and districts in Laos; they also wanted it supplied with modern means of transport and communications independently of the Government of Laos. They wanted the Commission to have a wide network of operational posts and representatives on Laotian airfields and borders, etc. This would have made it an all-embracing control apparatus over Laos. A neutralist delegate quite correctly qualified this as a desire to set up a state within a state. He was not far out because the Western proposals were clearly aimed at placing the Government of Laos and all its organs under the control of the International Commission. Some Western delegates even went so far as to propose a sort of trusteeship council for Laos consisting of the ambassadors of the conferees. U.S. Secretary of State Rusk proposed a special International Commission to control the use by Laos of foreign economic aid, that is to say, to control its economic development...

The Socialist countries considered it useful to leave the International Commission in Laos for a strictly specified period, and believed it necessary to have its functions and powers clearly defined. They also believed the Commission should work in co-operation and with the concurrence of the Government of Laos. They categorically rejected every attempt to give the Commission an extensive and ramified apparatus, and attached especial importance in connection with ensuring control in Laos to the institution of the two co-chairmen of the Conference, who were to guide the Commission...

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An adjacent issue was the principles of voting in the International Commission. The Western attitude was that all decisions in the Commission were to be taken by a majority. The meaning of this stand is clear. It is dictated by a desire to ensure the best possible opportunities for using the apparatus of the International Commission to interfere in the internal affairs of Laos and impose decisions on the Laotian Government.

The Socialist countries, supported in the main by the neutralist countries, held that it should adopt agreed decisions on all key issues and majority decisions on secondary matters, in particular, procedural questions. This proposal was based on the experience of the United Nations and some of its organs and commissions which often took decisions by an automatic majority. If the principles of peaceful co-existence between states and the pacific settlement of international issues are recognised, the dangerous practice of arbitrariness in international affairs is intolerable.

The International Commission consists of India, Poland and Canada, representing the three groups of states which reflect the face of the world today. It is not a casual assembly of men representing the interests and opinions of their Governments. It is a single organ set up by the 1954 Geneva Conference and confirmed by the new Conference. The decisions on Laos, adopted by the 14 Powers, were agreed, i.e., unanimous. The Commission, whose task it is to implement these decisions, can naturally do so only by agreement and in no other way. It would be strange indeed to have the Commission work on a different principle when implementing these unanimous decisions. The Socialist countries emphasised that if the International Commission were left for a moment without the principle of unanimity, it would surely become a source of conflict in Laos."

Regarding the SEATO clause contained in the Declaration on the Neutrality of Laos: "We do not intend to go into the matter at length, but there is no doubt that the fact that the statement on SEATO has been incorporated in the Declaration gives valuable support to national patriotic forces in the Asian countries which are members of CENTO and SEATO in their struggle for neutrality and independence. This provision is directly connected with the commitments of the conferees not to involve Laos in any military or other alliances incompatible with its status of neutrality." The article notes that "[f]avorable conditions are being created for Laos to take the path of progress and democratic development...The success of the Geneva talks on Laos is the first important step along the path on which Laos can become a truly independent and neutral country. The task is

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to apply the agreements in practice. This depends on the behaviour of the participants in the Conference, on how they will honour their commitments." Finally, the Soviets note that "[t]he nations expect the peaceful settlement of the Laotian question to become an example for a correct solution of other complex international problems which now cause tension and divide the world." *(M. Yegorov, "Some Results of the Laos Conference", International Affairs (Moscow), no. 9 (September 1962). pp. 49-55.)*

23 July-- In a reflection on the Geneva Accords on Laos made on 1 July 1967, US Secretary of State Rusk says that the United States had believed that there was an opportunity for ending fighting in Southeast Asia at the time of the Laos Accords. He states: "At that conference we accepted the nominee of the Communist side as the Prime Minister for Laos, as well as a coalition government worked out among the so-called 'Three Factions.' President Kennedy was bitterly disappointed with the results of those accords. Hanoi refused (a) to withdraw its forces from Laos, (b) to cease using Laos as an infiltration route into South Viet-Nam, (c) permit the coalition government to exercise authority in the Communist-held areas of Laos, and (d) to permit the International Control Commission to exercise its functions in those same areas. All of these were specifically required by the accords themselves. Performance and good faith in the agreements of 1962 would have represented a giant step toward peace throughout Southeast Asia." *(Department of State Bulletin, vol 57, pp. 92-93.)*

24 July-- China's Jenmin Jih Pao (People's Daily) says that the Geneva Agreements on Laos represent a "major setback for the United States plot of aggression in Southeast Asia and for the United States policies of aggression and war." *(New York Times, 25 July 1962, p. 5.)*

24 July-- In discussions with US Ambassador to Laos Leonard Unger on American and Filipino captives of the Pathet Lao, Prince Souphanouvong promises that "during a forthcoming visit [to Khang Khay, former rebel capital in the Plaines des Jarres] I will try to speed the prisoners' movement to assembly points from which they can be returned to their homes." The process of removal of captives will "take a week and perhaps more." Souphanouvong says that he does not know how many prisoners are alive or how many were returning as he has not as yet received from his own services a list of captives in their hands. *(New York Times, 25 July 1962, p. 5.)*

27 July-- The Soviet newspaper Pravda reports that the "imperialist forces are striving with particular persistence to consolidate their positions in Thailand and South Vietnam and from these

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territories to put pressure on neighboring countries... Using diplomatic pressure and military blackmail, the leaders of SEATO want to change Cambodia's policy." The article states that "[p]rovocations from Thailand and South Vietnam against Cambodia have recently assumed an especially serious nature...The South Vietnam clique does not confine itself to military provocations but has developed a noisy, anti-Cambodian propaganda campaign in the press and on the radio...It is clear that the provocational hit-and-run tactics of the Ngo Dinh Diem clique against neutral Cambodia constitute a deliberate war of nerves...No one can coubt that neither South Vietnam nor Thailand would have dared commit provocations against Cambodia without the sanction of Washington, which directs the activities of SEATO." *("Commentator", "Stop Provocations Against Cambodia", trans. DES, Pravda, 27 July 1962, p. 5.)*

August-- Further evidence that the NLF is seriously considering the formation of a genuine coalition government may be seen in the following statement, taken from a captured internal NLF document: "Owing to our persevering struggle, the enemy may get bogged down, unable to win. The more protracted the struggle, the more of a disadvantage they will face. Therefore they may be forced to negotiate and compromise. The nature of the negotiations will vary, depending on the relative strength of ourselves and the enemy. The result could be similar to that now seen in Laos. Or the outcome could be similar to the Algerian defeat of the French, whereby the enemy would be obliged to recognize our sovereignty and independence." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 359.)*

August-- French scholar and journalist Jean Lacouture, in his book Vietnam: Between Two Truces, discusses the National Liberation Front:

"There were many indications that the Front was not a communist organization, and the communists in it played only a partial role, even though they tried to infiltrate and control a wide array of different forces. Equally clear was the intention on the part of the N.L.F. leaders not to appear as the executors of a policy dictated from the North, or to seem to be satellites of Hanoi. Let me give some examples.

In August 1962 the Bulletin of the Liberation Front of South Vietnam published an interview granted to the N.L.F. press agency by Nguyen Huu Tho. When asked a question concerning a conflict between the guerrilla forces and one of the Front's parties, the N.L.F. president did not try to obscure this

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difference, but simply contented himself with issuing a warning to those who 'show their flimsiness by counting on the possibility of dissenters co-operating with imperialist agents.' Tho added: 'Necessarily, in our vast ranks there are differences and even conflicts.'

When his interviewer, quoting from a Cambodian paper, asked whether he was one of those 'authentic nationalists who had found it necessary to throw themselves into the arms of the communists because of Diem's brutal policy,' the N.L.F. president replied that he would not 'object' to being described in this fashion.

During the same period an N.L.F. representative told my colleague Georges Chaffard not far from the Cambodian border: 'We have long hoped for aid from the North. But we prefer to settle our affairs among Southerners. The North will not be a decisive element in our struggle...We have not been fighting for many years only to end up with having one dictatorship replaced by another. Nobody in our ranks is dependent upon the North.'

In Saigon in 1964 a Canadian clergyman who had lived for several months among the Viet Cong declared that according to his personal estimate, only 10 per cent of the N.L.F. were militant communists. Of course, the 'common front' strategy that the Marxists-Leninists know how to conduct with such masterful skill does not require a large proportion of communists to assure them of the control of power, provided that the circumstances are favorable to them; we have seen this during the period when some of the popular democracies were established." *(Jean Lacouture, Vietnam (New York: Random House, 1966), pp. 172-73.)*

3 August-- In a statement before the Passman subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, W. Averell Harriman, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, observes that he would have very little confidence in the Geneva Accords except for the fact that the Soviets had agreed to serve as co-chairman with Great Britain. He says of the Soviets: "They made it plain in the discussion that [their commitment as co-chairman] meant that they would be responsible for the Communist bloc, four Communist countries--China, Vietnam, and Poland--provided the United Kingdom would be responsible for the others." He also says: "It is hard to see what Mr. Khrushchev gains in personal reputation if he fails to carry out his agreement with President Kennedy and his agreement as signed in Geneva. Whether he will be able to do this or whether we will get into an argument about the facts, I do not know. But if it were not

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for the factors [of Soviet commitment], I say I would be very much concerned about it...Whether the non-Communists will work together or not depends upon the future to a great extent. If they do work together, they are in a majority and the Pathet Lao has been held off in the past, and they may be able to follow through and maintain their independence." *(87th Cong 2d Sess, Foreign Operations Appropriations for 1963, Hearings before a Subcommittee on Appropriations, House of Representatives (Washington: GPO, 1962), pt 3, pp. 536-37, 566.)*

18 August-- The Central Committee of the NLF issues a "14-Point Statement on Neutrality". As summarized by Douglas Pike, these points are:

"1. South Vietnam will not join and will not accept the protection of any military bloc or treaty.

2. All foreign military personnel will be withdrawn from South Vietnam.

3. South Vietnam will follow an independent, sovereign foreign policy.

4. The Bandung spirit of peaceful coexistence will be followed in relations with all countries.

5. An army will be built but with the sole aim of safeguarding South Vietnam's sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, and security.

6. South Vietnam will thoroughly realize democratic liberties for the people, and freedom of thought, worship, opinion, and organization will be guaranteed to all citizens, political parties, mass organizations, religions, and nationalities.

7. Economic aid without political conditions will be accepted from all countries.

8. Economic and trade policies will be democratic and independent.

9. Foreign nationals will be allowed to reside and earn their living in South Vietnam, and foreign capitalists will be permitted to do business, and their interests will be guaranteed provided they respect South Vietnam's laws.

10. South Vietnam will carry out cultural exchanges and broaden cultural cooperation with all countries.

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11. In view of the fact that Vietnam has been divided into two zones with different political regimes, due concern will be shown the question of reunification. Adequate consideration will be given to the characteristics of this situation and the two zones. This question will be decided by the people of the two zones on the principle of equality, non-annexation of one zone by the other, negotiations between the leaders of the two zones, and step-by-step reunification. Priority will be given to the consideration of the question of restoration of normal relations between the zones. The future political regime of unified Vietnam will be decided by the people of both zones.

12. South Vietnam will stand ready to form a peaceful and neutral zone with Cambodia and Laos.

13. South Vietnam will actively unite with all states and organizations and work for peace and friendship among nations.

14. South Vietnam's independence and neutrality will be respected and guaranteed by the countries and parties concerned in the 1954 Geneva agreements on Vietnam."

(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 365.)

20 August-- Cambodian Chief of State Norodom Sihanouk issues an appeal to the governments which attended the Geneva Conference on Laos, calling their attention "to threats, plots, sabotage, blockades, and aggression by neighboring powers that are very much stronger militarily, concerning whose annexationist aims there is no longer any doubt." He says that Cambodia can no longer endure this continual provocation and aggression. Therefore, he asks the participants in the Geneva Conference on Laos to hold another meeting and give Cambodia "the official recognition and guarantee of its neutrality and territorial integrity." *(Department of State, American Foreign Policy, Current Documents, 1962 (Washington: GPO, 1966), p. 1002.)*

27 August-- The Soviet news agency Tass reports that Premier Khrushchev has replied affirmatively to the suggestion by Cambodia's Norodom Sihanouk to convene an international conference on that Southeast Asian country. *(New York Times, 28 August 1962, p. 3.)*

23 September-5 October-- On 23 September, a National Liberation Front delegation, headed by its General Secretary Nguyen Van Hieu,

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arrives in Peking. At a rally held three days later, Kuo Mo-jo, Chairman of the China Peace Committee, ridicules those [presumably the modern revisionists, especially the Soviets] who "say that the nature of U.S. imperialism can change or has changed..." Numerous facts, he says, have disproved this thesis. Since the Geneva Conference reached a settlement on Laos, "the Kennedy Administration has made further use of Thailand for aggression against south Viet Nam. At the same time, U.S. imperialism continues its interference in the internal affairs of Laos. In an attempt to force Cambodia to abandon its policy of peace and neutrality, it has instructed Thailand and its stooges in south Viet Nam to invade Cambodia. It is seeking to rig up a "Northeast Asia alliance" as soon as possible with Japan as its nucleus, directed against China, the Soviet Union as well as the nationally independent countries of Asia." Thus, the "only thing to do is to wage a persistant blow-for-blow struggle" against "US imperialism". Upon leaving Peking, Nguyen Van Hieu receives in the text of a joint communique a rare statement of Chinese support for the NLF interpretation of neutrality: "A national, democratic coalition government embracing all political tendencies must be established [in South Vietnam], a foreign policy of peace and neutrality must be realized. South Vietnam must be prepared to form a neutral zone together with Cambodia and Laos, in which their respective sovereignty is fully retained." *("Our Correspondent", "China Backs South Viet Nam People's Anti-U.S. Struggle", Peking Review, V, no. 52 (28 September 1962), pp. 16-17; Harold C. Hinton, Communist China in World Politics (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966), p. 359.)*

28 September-- In response to complaints by US Secretary of State Rusk that North Vietnamese troops and Soviet technicians do not seem to be leaving Laos in compliance with the Geneva Accords, the Soviet press and the Pathet Lao accuse the US of seeking to retain its troops in that country. The United States is said to be continuing to extend aid to the pro-Western faction of the new regime. Both the Soviets and the Pathet Lao demand that US troops in Laos be ordered home rather than be reassigned to American units stationed in Thailand and South Vietnam. *(New York Times, 29 September 1962, p. 2.)*

October-- The Soviet journal International Affairs gives the following description of the Neo Lao Hak Xat:

"The Patriotic Party of Laos (Neo Lao Hak Sat in Laotian) has the greatest political influence in the country. It is the successor to the Pathet Lao movement which since 1949 headed

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the struggle of the Laotian people against French colonial rule. The Geneva agreements of 1954 and the Vientiane agreements, concluded in 1957 on the basis of the former, changed the status of the Pathet Lao movement. It became a legal, constitutional party known as Neo Lao Hak Sat which, in all previous pro-American Governments, represented the Left opposition (except for a few months in 1958 when members of Neo Lao Hak Sat served in the Government)...

Reactionary political opponents of Neo Lao Hak Sat have time and again declared it to be 'Communist'. In reality Neo Lao Hak Sat is not a Communist Party, but an alliance of patriotic elements from all sections of the Laotian people who want to see Laos a genuinely sovereign, independent, territorially and nationally united and economically prospering state, pursuing a policy of peace and neutrality.

The party energetically opposes all attempts of the U.S. imperialist circles to turn Laos into an American bridgehead for fighting the national-liberation movement in South-East Asia. It works for the establishment of friendly relations with all countries irrespective of their social system. Most of the members of Neo Lao Hak Sat come from the politically most active part of the working population, above all from the Laotian peasantry. The prominent political leader Prince Souphannouvong is the chairman of the Central Committee of Neo Lao Hak Sat." *("Political Parties of Laos", International Affairs (Moscow), no. 10 (October 1962), pp. 121-22.)*

October-- The Soviet journal International Affairs supports Prince Norodom Sihanouk's 20 August proposal for an international conference to draw up an agreement guaranteeing the neutrality and territorial integrity of Cambodia. The article reports that Sihanouk's appeal has also been supported by North Vietnam, China and Poland. It charges that "Thai and South Vietnamese military authorities [the former with US military advisors] have been staging armed provocations on Cambodia's frontiers...Violations of her air space by Thai and South Vietnamese military aircraft now run into the hundreds." The idea of holding a conference on Cambodia "stems from last June's successful outcome of the international conference on Laos. The newly independent peoples increasingly realise that international agreements like the Declaration on Laotian Neutrality are an effective way to defend the peace and sovereignty of states which do not wish to be subjected to the threat of interference by the imperialists and which wish to pursue their foreign and internal policies in accordance with their national traditions and sovereign will of their peoples." The Soviets pledge the "profound sympathy and support" of the Socialist camp to Cambodia's "struggle against

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foreign aggression." *(B. Karavayev, "Cambodia: For Real Neutrality", International Affairs (Moscow), no. 10 (October 1962), p. 83-84.)*

October-- In an article in International Affairs, NLF General Secretary Nguyen Van Hieu describes the origins of the guerrilla struggle in South Vietnam as the only possible response that the people could make to the repression of the Diem regime: "The People were faced with the alternative: struggle or death." Subsequently, the National Liberation Front was formed. It "has set the task of overthrowing the Ngo Dinh Diem clique, and establishing, pending the peaceful unification of the country, a neutral, peaceful, democratic national government on a coalition basis." With the increasing turmoil in the South, the NLF has issued the following demands: "Peace must be restored immediately; the aggressive war must be stopped; the U.S. imperialists must be forced to withdraw all their military personnel from South Viet-Nam; democratic freedoms must be proclaimed; the National Assembly must be re-elected; a peaceful neutral zone, embracing South Viet-Nam, Cambodia and Laos, must be established in Indochina." Hieu states that the "President of the South Viet-Nam National-Liberation Front, Nguyen Huu Tho, recently sent the Geneva Conference on Laos a memorandum expressing satisfaction at the formation of the Laotian national coalition Government and called on the 14 countries participating in the Geneva Conference to look into the extremely grave situation in South Viet-Nam. He welcomed the proposal put forward by Prince Norodom Sihanouk that an international conference should be summoned to seek a peaceful settlement of the South Viet-Nam question, with the Laotian solution as a model." This step, Hieu notes, "clearly testifies to the peace-loving nature of the South Viet-Nam population. However, if our just aspirations are not satisfied, the people of South Viet-Nam will do everything to protect their right to live, and to liberate their land." *(Nguyen Van Hieu, "We Are Confident of Final Victory", International Affairs (Moscow), no. 10 (October 1962), pp. 65-66.)*

5 October-- The United States announces the withdrawal of its remaining military advisers from Laos, one day before the deadline specified by the Geneva Agreement on Laos. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 115.)*

25 October-- Laotian Premier Souvanna Phouma returns to Vientiane from a two-day visit to Hanoi. He says that DRV Premier and Foreign Minister Pham Van Dong had given "his assurance that there are no North Vietnamese troops in Laos." He adds that Dong said that the Hanoi Government "asks that the International

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Control Commission be invited to investigate in order to throw a complete light on the situation and to remove all doubt." Right-wing General Phoumi Nosavan, however, reports that the North Vietnamese are reinforcing their troops in the region of Nam Tha, which has been held by the Pathet Lao since May. He states that intelligence reports indicate that the North Vietnamese had been withdrawing from the area for a few weeks but began returning two days ago. *(New York Times, 26 October 1962, p. 3.)*

5 November-- Major-General Sinkapo, commander-in-chief of the Pathet Lao forces, issues a statement from his headquarters in Khang Khay that supply flights by Soviet planes had ended the previous week. *(New York Times, 7 November 1962, p. 9.)*

8 November-- In retaliation for the establishment of diplomatic relations between Laos and North Vietnam, South Vietnam withdraws its Ambassador to Laos. *(Marcus G. Raskin and Bernard Fall, eds., The Viet-Nam Reader (New York: Random House, 1965), p. 338.)*

4 December-- Communist China announces that it has made a long-term loan to Laos for industrial construction and will build a road from China to Laos. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 117.)*

17 December-- Radio Hanoi broadcasts an appeal from the NLF in which the following passage occurs: "In the past two years, and especially in recent days, the Front has scored many great diplomatic successes. Many governments and international organizations consider the Front the legal representative of the 14 million people in South Vietnam." Since no country, Communist or non-Communist, had extended legal recognition to the Front, this statement may be seen as an attempt to bolster the NLF's legal and diplomatic status. As such, it was a complete failure. Summaries of the appeal printed in Peking and Moscow omitted the passage in question. *(P. J. Honey, Communism in North Vietnam (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1963), pp. 138-39.)*

20 December-- Radio Hanoi expresses its strong feelings about reunification. Note once again the emphasis on the issue of legality: "The relations between North and South are relations between two parts of the same country...To regard relations between the two parts of our country as though between two different countries is to recognize U.S. imperialism's neocolonialist regime, which was illegally established in the southern part of our country and is an illegal thing. Our compatriots in the South do not recognize that regime and are determined to topple it, for that is their inviolable right...We Vietnamese may not,

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after achieving liberation in the North, seek only to build up the North...The resistance for national salvation of our Southern compatriots is obligatory, necessary, and essential." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 330.)*

20 December-- The claim is made in the Soviet Government newspaper Izvestia that "[t]oday the National Liberation Front has been transformed into the largest and most representative organization of South Vietnam"—a much milder statement of support than the Front had been hoping for. *(Nguyen Van Vinh, "National Liberation Front of South Vietnam Is Two Years Old: Victory Will Be Ours!", trans. DES, Izvestia, 20 December 1962, p. 2.)*

20 December-- On the second anniversary of the founding of the National Liberation Front, Peking's People's Daily misstates the NLF platform, ignoring the issue of neutralization: "In 1960 this organization raised a platform that it stands for independence, democracy, food and clothing, and peaceful unification of the Fatherland." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 333.)*

27 December-- North Vietnamese theoretician Nguyen Van Vinh, in a Radio Hanoi broadcast, pessimistically assesses the events of the past year: "Southern events during the year prove that the forces and the struggle movement of the Southern compatriots can be maintained...under very difficult circumstances...Though not as intense or large as in the previous year, the struggle movement took place continually and more often...Our valiant Southern compatriots are fully capable of achieving final success..." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 160.)*

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1963-- Douglas Pike, writing in his book on the Viet Cong, describes VC concepts of how victory might be attained. He states: "It was abundantly clear from both the nature of the NLF struggle movement and the priorities employed, as well as from NLF documents, that the early doctrinaires believed the General Uprising and not the Giap third-stage military assault would be the culmination of the action programs and deliver final victory. It is true that the Giap thesis of 'first political struggle, then mixed political and armed struggle, then armed struggle, and finally again political struggle' continued as an ikon motif; but within this sort of generalized approach there was room for great latitude of interpretation. Among the earlier theorizers armed struggle was conceived of not as a military effort but as a series of violent actions, some of a military cast, that sought

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to achieve those goals that the political struggle movement could not achieve alone. The emergence of a military force for the purpose of fighting a more or less conventional war, similar to the final stages of the Viet Minh war, was considered highly risky and quite unnecessary. The Giap armed struggle phase was conceived of not as regiments or divisions openly confronting the enemy but as an explosion of small-unit acts of violence across the country. The end of the struggle then would be marked by a multitude of guerrilla-unit assaults, in unit force of perhaps 500 men, erupting simultaneously and in coordinated fashion throughout the country. ARVN revolts would break out in every unit as the result of the binh van movement. GVN officials would be assassinated in numbers. But most of all the people of the country, by the millions, would have taken to the streets in one grand struggle movement that would paralyze what remained of the GVN administrative and military power. This was the General Uprising, which could be accomplished without use of military or paramilitary units larger than a battalion." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 105.)*

13 January-- The Soviet Communist Party newspaper Pravda condemns the military "provocations" of Thailand and South Vietnam against Cambodia. The terrorization of border populations and the unauthorized conduct of aerial flights over Cambodian territory are alleged. The purpose of such actions, it is stated, is to lend support to the "free Khmer" movement which plans to invade Cambodia, form a government, appeal for external assistance, and thus give SEATO a pretext for intervening and removing Sihanouk's Government from the scene. *(Yu. Yasnev, "Shadow of SEATO Over Cambodia", trans. DES, Pravda, 13 January 1963, p. 4.)*

23 January-- The Soviet Government newspaper Izvestia accuses the US Pentagon of using Vietnam as "a testing ground for training their units." Under their military pacification program, it is charged, over 1,000 "large punitive operations" have been conducted, chemical poisons have been used against vegetation and populace, and thousands of people have been driven into "so-called 'strategic villages'" which are said to be, in effect, concentration camps. *(A. Popov, "Asia: Flame of Struggle Flares Up", trans. DES, Izvestia, 23 January 1963, p. 2.)*

24 January-- The left wing of the Laotian coalition Government demands that the US aid mission immediately leave the country "because it is committing flagrant violations of the 1962 Geneva Agreements. The Pathet Lao also demand the withdrawal of Air America, a charter company hired by the United States aid group. They charge that Air America's planes "are illegally

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flying over territory controlled by neutralist and Pathet Lao forces, dropping arms, ammunition, food and men originating from the United States aid mission and other American organizations." *(New York Times, 25 January 1963, p. 2.)*

25 January-- In a statement issued to the press by the American Embassy in Vientiane, the United States refutes the Pathet Lao claim that relief aircraft are used to drop arms and ammunition, that alleged arms drops originate outside Laos, and that the Air America contract air carrier is a paramilitary organization which violates the 1962 Geneva Accords. The statement begins by noting: "The United States will continue to do whatever possible to assist His Highness Prince Souvanna Phouma and his Government." It points out that humanitarian drops of supplies to Lao, Meo, Lao-Thoung, and other ethnic people in northern, central, and southern Laos are necessary because their livelihood has been disrupted by fighting. The rugged and roadless terrain precludes ordinary transport, and the people depend on air supply or would face starvation within a few weeks. This operation is large and expensive, involving about 1,500 tons of air-transported relief supplies per month. The statement regrets that the Pathet Lao have mounted extensive military operations against the hill people and are attempting to put an end to refugee relief. This program has been provided for in a formal agreement signed on 7 October 1962 by representatives of the Royal Government and the United States. The US Ambassador has made it clear that he would accept distinctive markings for the relief aircraft and would allow representatives from the three factions or the ICC to accompany the flights. It is stated that the United States is now discussing with the Royal Lao Government means for placing aircraft at that Government's disposition. *(US Department of State, American Foreign Policy, Current Documents, 1963 (Washington: GPO, 1967), pp. 806-09.)*

10 February-- As the Sino-Soviet dispute worsens, the Politburo of the Lao Dong Party issues an impassioned plea for unity:

"In recent years the world situation has developed in accordance with the predictions of the Declaration and Statement of the meetings of representatives of Communist and workers' parties in Moscow in 1957 and 1960. The socialist camp has recorded new and great achievements in all fields in the building of socialism and communism and the defense of world peace. The national liberation movement continued to gain momentum, and the colonial system was disintegrating in quick succession. In the capitalist countries the struggle of the working class

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against monopoly capitalism has drawn in many more strata of working people and has become stronger with every passing day. The contradictions rending the world capitalist system have deepened further...

The struggle of the people of various countries for peace, national independence, democracy, and socialism could have won still greater successes and caused many more setbacks and difficulties to imperialism if the socialist camp and the international Communist movement had united and co-ordinated actions more closely. However, it is regrettable that discords have arisen between a number of brother parties.

In the face of this situation, in January 1962, the Central Committee of the Lao Dong Party sent letters to a number of fraternal parties expressing its concern and proposing that a meeting be held between representatives of Communist and workers' parties to settle the discord together and that, pending such a meeting, the parties cease attacking one another in the press and over the radio.

After that the situation was at times somewhat improved, However, over the recent period events took place which aggravated the relations between a number of fraternal parties. All the imperialists and reactionary forces in the world are rejoicing over this and are seeking by all means to take advantage of it in an attempt to aggravate this state of things still further. Meanwhile all the Marxist-Leninists, the broad masses in various countries, and many progressive people in the world have shown concern and sorrow.

The Lao Dong Party holds that in a situation wherein the Communist movement has become powerful, the Communist and workers' parties are carrying out their activities in very different conditions, and the development of the revolutionary movement has raised before the parties many complicated problems; hence the fact that one party holds different views on certain questions from another is something difficult to avoid.

Nevertheless such divergences of views should not be allowed to harm the fraternal unity among our parties. The unity of the Communist and workers' parties is the nucleus for uniting the revolutionary movement of peoples all over the world. In the face of the enemy, the imperialists, who are seeking by all means to split the international Communist movement, sabotage the socialist camp, and sabotage peace, we should endeavor all the more to strengthen solidarity. The interests of socialism, world peace, and the future of mankind make it

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essential for us to unite. Solidarity is the guarantee of all our successes.

Communists have all the necessary conditions to overcome divergences of views and firmly to maintain and enhance unity within their ranks. We have a common enemy—imperialism. We have a common ideology—socialism and communism. We have a common program—the Moscow Declaration of 1957 and the Moscow Statement of 1960. These declarations and statements have laid down principles on the strategy and tactics of the international Communist and workers' movement, rules guiding the relations among Communist and workers' parties, and methods to overcome divergences of views which may arise between parties—that is, to meet and consult one another in order to reach unanimous views.* All Communist and workers' parties must most scrupulously respect all stipulations of these declarations and statements which have been recognized by all.

The Lao Dong Party holds that unity among the Communist and workers' parties of the countries in the socialist camp is of extreme importance for the unity of the international Communist movement, and that the unity between the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of China, between the Soviet Union and the Chinese People's Republic, constitutes the mainstay for uniting the socialist camp as a whole...

Recently a number of brother parties proposed that the parties stop criticizing one another in the press and over the radio and make active preparations for the holding of a meeting of representatives of Communist and workers' parties. Proceeding from its sincere desire to strengthen unity within the international Communist movement, the Politburo of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee welcomes such views and deems it necessary to recall the proposal previously made by our party. We propose the following concrete points:

1. The Communist and workers' parties should stop all reciprocal criticisms in the press, over the radio, and so on, and avoid any actions likely to bring about further misunderstanding and differences in order to create favorable conditions for the convening of a meeting of representatives of Communist and workers' parties.

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*The unanimity issue was essential to a Peking regime that would have been hopelessly outnumbered in any such international gathering of Communist parties. Thus, the reiteration of the unanimity principle here can be seen as a clear bow to China, a gesture which Hanoi was careful to balance with copious praise of the Soviets.

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2. That a meeting of Communist and workers' parties is aimed at further assessing together the situation and the tasks of the international Communist and workers' movement, and together discussing and settling divergences of views in order to strengthen unity and coordinate actions for common goals of struggle.

3. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of China have the greatest share of responsibility in preparing all necessary conditions for bringing that international meeting to achieve good results.

We think that in the present situation such an international meeting as was mentioned above needs careful preparations. We hold, however, that these preparations should be speedy so that the meeting can be held as early as possible. We earnestly call on all fraternal parties and all Communists to make active contributions to restore unity and to avoid all that may create further discords." *("Text of Statement of the Politburo of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee, February 10, 1963", in P. J. Honey, Communism in North Vietnam (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1963), pp. 181-85.)*

20 February-- Pravda reports that a Laotian delegation led by King Savang Vatthana, Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma and Foreign Minister Quinim Pholsena has visited Moscow from 11-18 February. Talks with Premier Khrushchev and President Leonid Brezhnev were held in an "atmosphere of sincere friendship and mutual understanding..." There was a "frank and useful exchange of opinions on questions related to the development and strengthening of relations between the Soviet Union and Laos as well as on several important problems of the present-day international situation." It is noted that both sides "believe that the Geneva agreements on Laos must be respected and strictly adhered to by all states." Both parties pledge to do this. Generally speaking, the language of the communique would seem to indicate the presence of substantial disagreement between the two sides on the issue of fulfilling the Geneva Accords. *("Joint Soviet-Laotian Communique", trans. DES, Izvestia, 20 February 1963, pp. 1-2.)*

27 February-- Communist China condemns the "infringement by imperialists and their followers on Cambodia's sovereignty, independence and neutrality" and pledges continued support for that nation. This is stated in a joint Chinese-Cambodian communique issued on the eve of the departure from Peking of Norodom Sihanouk after a 20-day state visit to China. The communique says that "satisfactory results" have been attained in discussions on matters of economic, technical and cultural cooperation. *(New York Times, 28 February 1963, p. 8.)*

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March-- The Lao Dong theoretical journal Hoc Tap states: "They [the authorities in South Viet-Nam] are well aware that North Viet-Nam is the firm base for the southern revolution and the point on which it leans, and that our party is the steady and experienced vanguard unit of the working class and people and is the brain and factor that decides all victories of the revolution." *(Department of State Publication 7839, Aggression From the North (Washington: GPO, 1965), p. 21.)*

March-- The NLF public policy of support for the formation of a coalition government is reflected in the following statement taken from an internal document: "What is the immediate task of the Revolution? It is to unite the entire nation, resolutely struggle against the U.S. aggressive and bellicose imperialism; smash the Ngo Dinh Diem dictatorial ruling clique, servant of U.S. imperialism; set up a democratic national coalition administration in South Vietnam; realize independence, democratic freedoms, and improvement of the people's living conditions; safeguard peace; and achieve national reunification on the basis of independence and democracy..." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 106.)*

March-- A People's Revolutionary Party assessment report reflects the pessimism of the period. The struggle is to be long and "full of hardships." Morale is seen to be a problem: "A very important point relating to leadership should be thoroughly understood. It is that this is a long struggle, full of hardships. The long struggle full of hardships is an essential process in the Revolution...It is a prolonged struggle because we are not yet in a position to defeat the enemy immediately but can do this only gradually, step by step...Many comrades in our Party are not fully aware of this problem. Many are not adequately prepared morally to meet it. In providing moral leadership to the cadres, Party members, and the masses, we should educate them to understand that this is a prolonged struggle full of hardships but sure of success. We must stimulate and strengthen their fighting spirit, their courage, and their perseverance so they will never flinch, will constantly be cautious, and resolutely overcome all hardships and difficulties. We must preserve our military forces and avoid being foolhardy. We must teach all to win without arrogance, lose without discouragement, certain that eventually we will liberate the South and unify the Fatherland." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 159.)*

9 March-- Peking radio charges that the United States is using "asphyxiation gases" and "noxious chemicals...to poison innocent South Vietnamese people and devastate crops" in South Vietnam. The broadcast says that the Chinese Red Cross has protested use of "chemical poisons by US imperialism to murder civilians and destroy crops

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in South Viet Nam." On this same day, the US State Department replies: "We have never used poison gas in South Viet Nam, and there is no truth in Communist reports that we are using it now." The chemicals used are explained to be "nontoxic to humans and animals when used in the prescribed manner, that is, sprayed on trees and underbrush in the open air." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 120.)*

13 March-- In a speech commemorating the 80th anniversary of the death of Karl Marx, Lao Dong First Secretary Le Duan discusses the international situation and the prospects for national liberation movements in Vietnam and elsewhere. He says that the "colonies and dependent countries have become the focus of the various types of contradictions and the weakest link in the imperialist chain...The present phase is clearly one in which revolutionary forces are launching continuous strategic attacks on imperialism on a world scale...foiling its plots for war and aggression, and compelling it to give up its positions one by one, directly destroying it at first piecemeal and then completely." While the general tone of his speech is pro-Chinese, Le Duan bows to the Soviet concept of the "peaceful road" to power. Clearly, he does not think it relevant for Vietnam: "...[R]are as it might be, Communists should do everything to strive for it as long as a real possibility existed, even though the chance was one in a hundred. The possibility of peaceful revolution could arise when the bourgeoisie, for certain reasons, possessed no apparatus of violence to counteract the will of the workers, and were prepared to accept compromises." *(Le Duan, Hold High the Revolutionary Banner of Creative Marxism, Lead Our Revolutionary Cause to Complete Victory! (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1964), pp. 23-29, 36-41.)*

30 March-- Sporadic fights break out in Laos between the Pathet Lao and the forces of neutralist Kong Le. Kong Le charges the Pathet Lao with being "foreign lackeys" who are attempting to make Laos "a new kind of colony of international communism." He says: "Foreigners who are the bosses" of the Pathet Lao are "steathily sending soldiers, weapons, and war equipment" to Laos. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 121.)*

1-2 April-- On 1 April, Laotian Foreign Minister Quinim Pholsena is assassinated by one of his guards, who later says that Quinim, who had close connections with the Pathet Lao, wanted to overthrow the coalition government. On the next day, a statement signed by Deputy Premier Souphanouvong asserting that the United States is responsible for the Foreign Minister's death is broadcast over a Pathet Lao radio station. The statement urges

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"instilling in the people of Laos a hatred of the United States." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 121.)*

3 April-- Addressing itself to the assassination of Laotian Foreign Minister Quinim Pholsena, the Soviet newspaper Pravda declares that the "murder committed yesterday was one of the links in the criminal policy of international and internal reaction, which is trying to thwart the fulfillment of the Geneva agreements and to rekindle the fire of war in Laos...The aim of the reactionary circles has been to cause a schism in the militant alliance of the neutralists and the Pathet Lao, which evolved in the years of the struggle for the country's national independence, and a weakening in the ranks of the neutralists through the physical destruction of the leaders of its left wing. The first step on this criminal course was the Feb. 12 murder of Col. Ketsana in the Plaine des Jarres, organized by agents of the reactionary forces." Following that incident, it is claimed, "a further series of terrorist acts was committed." *(I. Shchedrov, "Villainous Murder—Tragic End of Foreign Minister Quinim Pholsena, Prominent Laotian Statesman", trans. DES, Pravda, 3 April 1963, p. 5.)*

16 April-- The Chinese and North Vietnamese, in statements issued in Peking and Hanoi, charge that "large numbers of military men and special agents of the United States and other SEATO members, as well as soldiers of the remnant of the Chiang Kai-shek gang, have already entered the area" of Xiengkhouang and the Plaine des Jarres, where the fighting in Laos is centered. The two governments urge Britain and the USSR to consult soon on this "very serious" situation. They suggest that if the crisis deepens the 14-nation conference on Laos be reconvened. *(New York Times, 17 April 1963, p. 14.)*

22 April-- Pravda accuses the United States of having "embarked on a course of open sabotage" of the 1962 Geneva Accords. It says that the "agents" of the CIA and the Pentagon have temporarily succeeded in causing a schism in the ranks of the national patriotic forces of Laos. This uncompromising line and Soviet unwillingness to exert pressure on the Pathet Lao to permit the ICC to establish a permanent base for its truce teams on the Plaine des Jarres would appear to be a clear indication that Moscow will not join Great Britain in diplomatic moves to restore the political balance in Laos. *(S. Astakhov, "On International Themes: Who Complicates the Situation in Laos", trans. DES, Pravda, 22 April 1963, p. 4.)*

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22 April-- Speaking at a dinner in Peking, Premier Chou En-lai calls the situation in Laos "extremely disquieting" and "dangerous". He advocates international action "to check the United States acts of interference and aggression in Laos and reverse the dangerous situation there." Chou declares that the US has openly violated the 1962 Accords on Laos, in particular by instigating and engineering recent "political murders" and the outbreak of fighting in the Plaine des Jarres. These acts, he says, threaten the "peace, independence and neutrality of Laos." *(New York Times, 22 April 1963, p. 2.)*

24 April-- With the Laotian conflict in progress between the Pathet Lao and forces loyal to Kong Le, President Kennedy is asked whether the Soviet Union is not as much in control in Laos as it was in 1961 and 1962. He replies: "Well, that, I think, is a matter which I think time will tell us. There was a direct control because of the supply lines which were being maintained by the Soviet airlift. Whether the Soviets maintain the same degree of control now, whether they desire to maintain their influence, and whether their influence will be thrown in the direction of a maintenance of the Geneva settlement are the questions which I think we should find answered in the next 3 or 4 weeks." In response to another question at the press conference, President Kennedy agrees with the "domino concept." He says that "if Laos fell into Communist hands it would increase the danger along the northern frontiers of Thailand. It would put additional pressure on Cambodia and would put additional pressure on South Viet-Nam, which in itself would put additional pressure on Malaya...So I do accept the view that there is an interrelationship in these countries and that is one of the reasons why we are concerned with maintaining the Geneva accords as a method of maintaining stability in Southeast Asia. It may be one of the reasons why others do not share that interest." *(Public Papers of the Presidents, John F. Kennedy, 1963 (Washington: GPO, 1964), p. 344.)*

26 April-- In Moscow, after a three-hour meeting with Khrushchev, Under Secretary of State Averell Harriman announces that the Soviet Union joins the United States in support of the 1962 Geneva Agreements on Laos. Mr. Harriman is reported to have told the Soviet Premier that the US is determined to prevent a Communist take-over of Laos in violation of the Geneva Agreements. This implication of military intervention is combined with an appeal from President Kennedy for joint implementation of those Accords. The firmness of the American position is emphasized by the presence of 7th Fleet off the coast of Southeast Asia where it could land marines for deployment in Laos and Thailand. In spite of these pressures, Mr. Khrushchev

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gives no indication that he will try to restrain or can restrain the pro-Communist forces in Laos. Subsequently, Washington sources note that the North Vietnamese appear to be playing the key role in encouraging Pathet Lao attacks, perhaps in retaliation for American military aid to South Vietnam. When asked about Communist charges of US military aid to the right-wing forces in Laos, Harriman replies that Mr. Khrushchev and Mr. Mikoyan had not made these charges to him themselves, but had referred to them as complaints lodged by a nation (presumably China) that had participated in the Geneva Conference. Mr. Harriman reports that Khrushchev had "unequivocally reaffirmed" the Soviet commitment to support peace and neutrality in Laos. He adds that the Premier agrees in principle that the Control Commission should be allowed free movement in Laos as provided for in the Accords. *(New York Times, 27 and 28 April 1963, pp. 1 and 2, 1 and 3 respectively.)*

26 April-- According to Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., during the meeting between Khrushchev and Harriman "Khrushchev seemed bored by the subject and asked Harriman irritably why Washington bothered so much about Laos." *(Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., A Thousand Days, John F. Kennedy in the White House, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1965), p. 517.)*

27 April-- While conferring with his half-brother Prince Souphanouvong at the Pathet Lao headquarters in Khang Khay, Souvanna Phouma is told that United States intervention has changed the "entire situation". Souphanouvong charges the Americans with having airlifted 17 planeloads of right-wing troops into the Plaine des Jarres region to reinforce neutralist forces under General Kong Le. According to Souphanouvong, the total number of men ferried to that area represents a full battalion of 500 men. The Pathet Lao leader demands that the truce discussions be broadened to include this and other problems. Previously, Kong Le had denied such charges and invited the ICC to make a personal investigation of the area in question. This invitation, however, was not accepted by the Control Commission, which instead accompanied Souvanna Phouma to Khang Khay. According to sources in Vientiane, the Pathet Lao charges are in reaction to a statement made the previous day by Souvanna Phouma that rapprochement with a former enemy should not be interpreted as treason toward a former ally. *(New York Times, 28 April 1963, p. 3.)*

May-- DRV General Nguyen Chi Thanh, writing in a Hanoi newspaper, underlines the importance of the People's Army of [North] Vietnam in the struggle for reunification: "Our party set forth two strategic tasks to be carried out at the same time: to transform and build socialism in the North and to struggle to unify the country.

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Our army is an instrument of the class struggle in carrying out these two strategic tasks." *(Department of State Publication 7839, Aggression From the North (Washington: GPO, 1965), p. 21.)*

May-- The general direction and philosophy of NLF land policy is reflected in the following excerpt from a directive from the Long An Province Central Committee: "Our policy is...to reduce land rents and ensure the ownership of land by the peasants...to give back to the peasants land received during the Resistance and later stolen from them by the U.S.-Diem clique or reactionary landowners...The Front does not consider rich peasants as landowners...but maintains a coalition policy toward them if they reduce rents for [their] tenants...It respects the rights of middle-class peasants..., respects the lands of convents, pagodas, and temples..., respects the rights of landowners in the cities to collect rents in the rural areas, and, further, their ownership [title] is recognized...With respect to land owned by the tyrannical and reactionary landlords who closely support the U.S.-Diem clique, we lead the peasants in their drive to refuse to pay land rent. With respect to those landlords who more or less support the Revolution we continue to recognize their ownership rights but lead the struggle of the farmers to obtain rent reductions according to a flexible rate that suits the present situation..." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 277.)*

May-- General Giap, in an interview for the weekly Revolution Africaine, discusses lessons learned from the battle of Dien Bien Phu. Of particular interest is the following statement made with regard to Communist negotiating technique: "We all know that Dien Bien Phu has paved the way for the conclusion of the Geneva Agreements in 1954 restoring peace in Indo-China ...Therefore we can conclude that every negotiation with the imperialists must be backed by and go along with a resolute struggle under every form against all their perfidious schemes; it is only when the people's forces have grown in the struggle that the imperialists resign themselves to relinquish their privileges and interests and recognize our legitimate rights." *(Vo Nguyen Giap, "Answer to an Interview of the Weekly Revolution Africaine on the Occasion of the Anniversary of the Dien Bien Phu Victory", in Dien Bien Phu (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1964), pp. 251-52.)*

5 May-- Cambodia and Communist China sign an agreement pledging friendship and support for each other's foreign policies. China states that it supports Cambodia's territorial integrity and joins in its "fight against foreign imperialism", apparently a reference to the Cambodian border disputes with Thailand and South Vietnam. *(New York Times, 6 May 1963, p. 2.)*

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6 May-- In Vientiane, a pro-Communist broadcast is heard outlining Pathet Lao terms for peace. The Communists ask that Souvanna Phouma order General Kong Le to halt his "attacks" upon them and the forces of dissident neutralist Colonel Deuane, which have been fighting with the Pathet Lao. Compensation is asked for slaughtered water buffalo and cattle. The arrest is demanded of the neutralist provost marshal in Vientiane as the "instigator" of the assassination of Quinim Pholsena. Other demands include the "withdrawal" of right-wing troops, Americans, Thais and "others" from "liberated" (Pathet Lao-controlled) territory. *(New York Times, 7 May 1963, p. 8.)*

23-29 May-- On 23 May, the International Control Commission for Laos requests the Soviet Union and Great Britain, as co-chairmen of the 1962 Geneva Conference, to urge the Pathet Lao and neutralist forces to cease fighting, which has again broken out on the Plaine des Jarres on 14 May. On 29 May, the USSR and Great Britain respond with an appeal to the two factions to end hostilities and effect "peace, concord, and strict neutrality." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 122.)*

29 May-- A joint message from Andrei A. Gromyko for the Soviet Union and Lord Home for the United Kingdom is sent to Laotian Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma calling upon him to propose meetings between the three sides to the conflict in Laos and to assist the International Commission in making a settlement. *(Richard P. Stebbins, ed., Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1963 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1964), pp. 286-87.)*

31 May-- In a message to Great Britain, Moscow demands the imposition of a strict Communist veto over the activities of the International Control Commission. In addition, the news agency Tass publishes a draft of a Soviet-proposed message from the co-chairmen of the Geneva Conference to the ICC instructing it to adhere to the unanimity rule. Moscow supports the Polish delegate's complaints that the Indian and Canadian members had by majority decisions sent a "permanent group" to the Plaine des Jarres in an effort to end the fighting. The Soviet draft message is framed so as to subject the activities of the ICC to a Communist veto by two means: First, it cites the terms of the Geneva Accords, which require the Commission to solve major questions by unanimous decisions. Second, the Soviet draft insists that the movements of the members of the ICC be subject to the approval of the Laotian coalition government, also as stipulated in the Geneva Agreements. The Soviets interpret this to mean that approval must be obtained from all

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three factions of the Government before action can be taken. Britain maintains that only the consent of Souvanna Phouma is needed. On this same day, the British Foreign Office replies that it is "disappointing and disturbing that the Soviet Government should have published their draft message before we had had the opportunity to discuss it with them...The Soviet draft is an unconvincing attempt to justify the non-cooperation of the Polish Commissioner in carrying out these [Geneva] provisions [concerning the responsibilities of the ICC]. It has been published before the co-chairmen could consider the comments on the Polish allegations, which are on their way to them from Indian and Canadian Commissioners." *(Texts of the Soviet Draft Message and the British Reply may be found in Anita Lauve Nutt, Troika on Trial, Appendixes, v. III (Contract SD-220, Office of International Security Affairs, DOD, September 1967), pp. 110-13.)*

7 June-- Communist China's official press agency denies that Chinese troops are stationed in northern Laos. *(New York Times, 8 June 1963, p. 8.)*

16 June-- An editorial in Peking's Jenmin Jih Pao asks the Soviet Union to support a joint stand against the United States in Laos. The newspaper implies that Moscow has not done enough to "distinguish right from wrong in Laos." It attacks the US for "aggression and intervention" in the Southeast Asian kingdom and warns that China will not "look idly on while others" threaten "China's security." *(New York Times, 17 June 1963, p. 5.)*

17 June-- In a letter to the Soviet Communist Party, China warns the Soviet Union that any form of collaboration with the United States would be betraying the people of the world. The letter also states that "[c]ertain persons in the international Communist movement are taking a passive or scornful or negative attitude toward the struggles of the oppressed nations for liberation." *(New York Times, 17 June 1963, p. 5.)*

18 June-- A letter from Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma of Laos to Lord Home states that pro-Communist groupings in Laos continue to impose unacceptable conditions for a meeting as requested by the Soviet Union and Great Britain on 29 May. The Pathet Lao have also violated the cease-fire, and the Geneva Accords are being gravely compromised. *(Richard P. Stebbins, ed., Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1963 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1964), pp. 287-88.)*

July-- An agit-prop memorandum discusses the People's Revolutionary Party's conception of neutralization: "The peaceful neutrality

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proposed by our Party is quite different from the neutralism of capitalism in a nationalistic country. Our neutrality is a new form of struggle and a part of the international proletarian revolution. Thus in reality there is no neutrality but the choice of the socialist side and the determination to fight back imperialism, especially U.S. imperialism...A peaceful policy of neutrality does not hinder the democratic national revolution...If the leadership of the Party is correct and knows how to exploit circumstances to broaden the anti-U.S.-Diem force, the Revolution will advance easily. The term "peaceful neutrality" exploits favorable circumstances to hasten the national democratic revolution and hasten the reunification of the country." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969), p. 364.)*

4 July-- Britain's Lord Home informs Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko that the Democratic Republic of Vietnam is perpetrating gross breaches of the Geneva Agreements on Laos. He states that his country is prepared to use its influence to ensure that the right-wing forces do not obstruct the unity of Laos if the left-wing is willing to exhibit a similar spirit of cooperation. *(Richard P. Stebbins, ed., Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1963 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1964), pp. 289-90.)*

23 July-- While the NLF had, since its creation, vacillated somewhat on the question of reunification, the People's Revolutionary Party had always been fiercely loyal to Hanoi. PRP chairman Vo Chi Cong declares over Radio Liberation that "[l]oyal to the view that Vietnam is indivisible and the Vietnamese nation indivisible, the PRP never abandons struggling for a unified Vietnam. The first task we face is liberation of South Vietnam and... establishment of a neutralist foreign policy...In liberating the South our people will also create practical conditions for unification...for then unification will become an internal problem...The PRP feels this stand is opportune and necessary...and in accordance with the spirit and the words of the 1954 Geneva accords...Marxist-Leninists in South Vietnam are happy to pursue this correct struggle line." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 369.)*

27 July-- W. Averell Harriman responds to a question concerning his recent conversation with Nikita Khrushchev which touched on Laos. He is asked whether the Soviet Government has been requested to use its influence with the Pathet Lao to obtain

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an end to the fighting. He replies in the affirmative, noting that discussions on the matter are currently taking place between the British and Soviet co-chairmen of the Geneva Conference. He describes his three-hour conversation with Khrushchev as "useful but inconclusive, and we will have to wait and see what happened on the ground." *(New York Times, 28 July 1963, p. 14.)*

August-- The Soviet journal International Affairs describes the goals of the National Liberation Front as the overthrow of the Diem Government, the establishment of a national coalition regime and the gradual reunification of North and South Vietnam "on a peaceful and democratic basis." *(V. Vasilyev, "Vietnam—The Struggle Continues", International Affairs (Moscow), no. 8 (August 1963), pp. 109-10.)*

9 August-- A Soviet Foreign Ministry draft message from the co-chairmen of the Geneva Conference on Laos to Souvanna Phouma and the French Government is handed to the British Ambassador in Moscow for his government's consideration. The message concerns the French military base at Seno. In accordance with the Geneva Agreements, this base, which is on Laotian territory, is subject to transfer to the coalition government in Vientiane. The conditions of transfer are to be worked out in accords between the French Government and the Laotian coalition government. "However", Pravda states, "as Prince Souphanouvong, Chairman of the Neo Lao Hak Sat, reports, the question of acceptance of the Seno base has not been discussed in the coalition government with the participation of the three political forces. Prince Souphanouvong rightly points out that the principle of unanimity of the three political forces in the coalition government has been violated in this case, since a question related to the acceptance of a foreign military base located on the territory of Laos required the concerted decision of all three sides represented in the coalition government." The draft message states: "Attaching great importance to the precise and steadfast fulfillment of the Geneva agreements, the co-chairmen appeal to Prime Minister Prince Souvanna Phouma with the request that the question of the Seno base be considered by the coalition government in accordance with the Geneva agreements and that the three sides adopt a concerted decision. The co-chairmen share Prince Souphanouvong's opinion that, until such time as a single national army is created, the Seno base should be turned over to a garrison composed of equally strong military units representing the three political groupings of Laos." *("For Steadfast Fulfillment of Geneva Agreements on Laos", trans. DES, Pravda, 14 August 1963, p. 3.)*

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13 August-- In an interview with Australian Communist journalist Wilfred Burchett, Ho Chi Minh describes the war in the South as having begun because "[f]rom 1955 onwards a campaign of extermination was directed against all those patriots who had taken part in the Resistance War. Our compatriots at first tried to defend themselves peacefully by demanding their legal rights as guaranteed by the Geneva Agreements...But the...[ICC] proved powerless to halt the massacres, as it proved powerless to ensure the provisions for the general elections to reunify the country..." Finally, Ho states, the patriots had no choice but to fight or die. Direct US military intervention since 1961 has only "fortified their resolve to fight if necessary a long-term war of resistance..." He says that "[m]ost of the countryside has now been liberated...and is administered by elected Committees of the National Front for Liberation. U.S.-Diemist control is now essentially limited to the towns and some of the strategic highways." Ho describes the Diem regime as an "artificial creation of the U.S. Government. It has no popular support... and never has had. It is a feudal, despotic family regime in which all political power and the economic resources of the country rest in the hands of the Ngo family." He describes the guerrillas' weapons as "primitive arms made by themselves and those they can capture from their oppressors..." *(Ho Chi Minh, "Interview Granted to Wilfred Burchett, Correspondent of the American National Guardian and the Algerian Revolution Africaine", Against U.S. Aggression, For National Salvation (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1967), pp. 40-43.)*

21 August-- Stating that developments in Laos and Buddhist disorders in Vietnam are dangerous to security, President Diem proclaims a state of siege to restore security and public order so that the state may be protected, Communism defeated, freedom secured, and democracy attained. This proclamation is followed by a GVN declaration that the exploitation of religion for political purposes and the turning of pagodas into quarters for propaganda and agitation will not be tolerated. On the night of 21 August, Vietnamese police and Government special forces raid pagodas in Saigon, Hue, and other major coastal towns and arrest 352 monks, 290 nuns, and 121 novices. *(US Department of State, American Foreign Policy, Current Documents, 1963 (Washington: GPO, 1967), pp. 862-66.)*

27 August-- Cambodia breaks off diplomatic relations with South Vietnam. *(Marcus G. Raskin and Bernard B. Fall, eds., The Viet-Nam Reader (New York: Random House, 1965), p. 390.)*

29 August-- Mao Tse-tung, in a broadcast over Peking Radio, states: "Setting itself against all the people of South Viet Nam, the U.S.-Ngo Dinh Diem clique now finds itself besieged by them...

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The Ngo Dinh Diem regime will inescapably end in total isolation and disintegration, and U.S. imperialism will finally have to get out of South Viet Nam." On this same day, Ho Chi Minh, referring to Diem's persecution of the Buddhists, says that the situation in South Vietnam is "extremely serious and distressing." He urges the South Vietnamese people to "unite, struggle and win." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 126.)*

29 August-- President de Gaulle makes the following statement to the French Council of Ministers: "The French Government is following with attention and emotion the grave events occurring in Vietnam. The task accomplished in the past by France in Cochin China, Annam and Tonkin, the ties she has maintained in the country as a whole, and the interest she takes in its development explains why she understands so well and shares sincerely in the trials of the Vietnamese people. In addition, France's knowledge of the merits of this people makes her appreciate the role they would be capable of playing in the current situation in Asia for their own progress and to further international understanding, once they could go ahead with their activities independently of the outside, in internal peace and unity and in harmony with their neighbors. Today more than ever, this is what France wishes for Vietnam as a whole. Naturally it is up to this people, and to them alone, to choose the means of achieving it, but any national effort that would be carried out in Vietnam would find France ready, to the extent of her own possibilities, to establish cordial cooperation with this country." *(US Department of State, American Foreign Policy, Current Documents, 1963 (Washington: GPO, 1967), p. 869.)*

30 August-- Liao Cheng-chih, chairman of the Chinese Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Committee, praises the "just struggle of the Buddhists and other sections of the people in south Viet Nam" and attacks the "modern revisionists" (i.e. the Soviet Union) for their policy of "colluding with "US imperialism": "The modern revisionists...are not only pouring cold water on the South Vietnamese people's just struggle and trying their utmost to disparage its world significance but are trying to make a very despicable deal with the U.S. imperialists at the expense of the South Vietnamese people...As it will thwart their dream of colluding with U.S. imperialism they hold, according to their logic, that the South Vietnamese people should lay down their arms and act the part of the conquered people, ...thus betraying Marxism-Leninism and selling out the South Vietnamese people and the people of the world. [Stormy applause.] If only the South Vietnamese people will unite around the NLFSV with the support of the people of North Vietnam and the whole world, they will most assuredly be able to surmount all difficulties and win final victory." *("Our Correspondent", "Support the South Vietnamese People's Heroic Struggle", Peking Review, VI, no. 36 (6 September 1963), pp. 24-25.)*

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31 August-- Puzzled by Charles de Gaulle's Vietnam statement of 29 August, the Soviet Government newspaper Izvestia speculates over its meaning: "One thing is clear: De Gaulle chose to present his statement at a time when relations between Saigon and Washington are extremely tense. The statement attests to France's desire to take advantage of the disagreements between the Americans and the Ngo Dinh Diem clique." Some people, it is noted, even assert that the French action constitutes a "jab in the back of the American 'allies.'" *(S. Zykov, "De Gaulle's Saigon Jab", trans. DES, Izvestia, 31 August 1963, p. 2.)*

4 September-- The NLF had tended to de-emphasize Diem's growing struggle with the Buddhists. Now, at a critical stage in the crisis, an extraordinary session of the Presidium meets and issues a statement condemning the actions of the Diem Government against the Buddhists but clearly putting primary responsibility on the US: "The conference found that the origin of the present and extremely grave situation in South Vietnam is the criminal interventionist and aggressive policy of U.S. imperialism and the dictatorial and cruel regime of the Ngo family that the United States set up, which is thoroughly rotten and hated and scorned by all Southern people. Unable to learn, the warlike U.S. clique, headed by Kennedy, is advancing further and further into the endless tunnel. It is trying to find means to dominate South Vietnam." This statement may be viewed as reflecting the widespread expectation of the fall of Diem. *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 352.)*

6 September-- The US State Department releases a statement denying the Soviet charge, released this same day by the news agency Tass, that the United States violated the Geneva Accords by illegally introducing military aircraft into Laos. The Royal Lao Government on 30 August also branded the charge, which had been made by the Pathet Lao, as "pure propaganda". The US statement notes that the United States, at the request of Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma, has provided the Laotian Government with six T-28 aircraft as replacements for six T-6 aircraft of the RLAF which had become worn out. This military equipment was furnished in full accordance with Article 6 of the Geneva Protocol. *(US Department of State, American Foreign Policy, Current Documents, 1963 (Washington: GPO, 1967), pp. 815-16.)*

8 September-- The Cambodian Ministry of Information reports that three MIG-17 fighter planes and 24 radar-equipped anti-aircraft guns have been received from the Soviet Union. *(New York Times, 9 September 1963, p. 3.)*

11 September-- As the conflict between Diem and the Buddhists increases, the National Liberation Front sends a "3-point peace plan" to the

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United Nations* calling for "an end to American military assistance, withdrawal of American forces, and a coalition government of political and religious organizations..." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 352.)*

11 September-- NLF Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho sends a letter to the United Nations General Assembly calling for: (1) an end to United States participation in Vietnamese affairs, (2) withdrawal of United States military forces, (3) an armistice, and (4) the establishment by South Vietnamese of a national, democratic, peaceful, and neutral coalition government. No mention is made of the issue of reunification. *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 359.)*

20 September-- In an address before the UN General Assembly, Laotian Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma states that since April 1963 his country has become the scene of new disturbances. The ICC has rarely been able to take any positive action for lack of unanimity. In the interests of peace, therefore, he appeals to the great powers, especially the signatories of the Geneva Agreements, to respect "both the letter and the spirit of the undertakings into which they have entered." *(US Department of State, American Foreign Policy, Current Documents, 1963 (Washington: GPO, 1967), pp. 816-17.)*

24 September-- Writing in the French-language Réalités Cambodgiennes, Norodom Sihanouk discounts President De Gaulle's statement of the previous month that foreign influence be eliminated from both North and South Vietnam: "This appeal ...seems to me unrealistic with respect to North Vietnam and already too late for South Vietnam." He says that this "is a great shame. The fate of Vietnam appears to me to be sealed. That of my own country certainly will be also some time later. At least we shall have the slim consolation of having frequently warned the Western world." *(New York Times, 25 September 1963, p. 2.)*

29 September-- At the height of the struggle between Diem and the Buddhists, Mao Tse-tung warns that the "people of South Vietnam should not base their hopes for liberation on the wisdom of the American imperialists or Diem. On the contrary, victory can be achieved only by a unified, persistent struggle ...We Chinese are determined to support this struggle for righteousness and justice by the South Vietnamese people." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 335.)*

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*At this time, the NLF still held some respect for the UN. This attitude was to change abruptly in mid-1964 (to be documented later).

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October-- The Soviet journal International Affairs states that the turmoil in South Vietnam represents "the last convulsions of a doomed regime." It says that "[w]orld opinion demands that the U.S.A. should immediately stop supporting Ngo Dinh Diem and his clique, withdraw the U.S. expeditionary corps from South Viet-Nam, remove all war materiel, and allow the South Vietnamese people to exercise their right of deciding their internal affairs without foreign intervention...World opinion is concerned over the grave situation in South Vietnam. It demands that this question should be discussed at the current session of the U.N. General Assembly." *(F. Khalin, "South Vietnam: Doomed Regime in Death Throes", International Affairs (Moscow), no. 10 (October 1963), p. 86.)*

29 October-- A US State Department spokesman, in response to a question at a press briefing in Washington, says that armaments, munitions, and war materiel introduced into Laos from North Vietnam have not been requested by the Royal Lao Government and are therefore in violation of the Geneva Agreements. He says that Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma made this point in a letter to the Geneva co-chairmen on 20 June 1963, and that the matter has been brought to the attention of the International Control Commission, which has not been allowed to conduct meaningful investigations in Pathet Lao-held territory. *(US Department of State, American Foreign Policy, Current Documents, 1963 (Washington: GPO, 1967), p. 818.)*

1 November-- In Saigon, a coup ousts Ngo Dinh Diem. Sir Robert Thompson, Permanent Defense Secretary in Malaya from 1948-1960 and Head of the British Advisory Mission in South Vietnam from 1961-1965, later comments that "two allied but completely conflicting forces, reinforced by the emotions of American liberalism, overthrew the government and killed President Diem. These two conflicting forces were those who still wanted to win the war and thought they could run it better, and those who wanted to overthrow a dedicated but authoritarian anti-Communist government in order to seek a peaceful and neutral solution." He adds that the "Viet Cong could not have engineered it better." *(Sir Robert Thompson, Defeating Communist Insurgency, The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), p. 42.)*

3 November-- The Soviet Government newspaper Izvestia, commenting on the fall of Diem, charges that "the U.S.A. decided to remove Ngo, with the help of the generals." *("Inglorious End of Ngo Dinh Diem—Washington and the Coup in Saigon", trans. DES, Izvestia, 3 November 1963, p. 2.)*

7 November-- In its first post-Diem statement, the National Liberation Front issues "8 demands":

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"1. Destroy all strategic hamlets and quarters and other disguised concentration camps.

2. Release all political detainees, whatever their political tendencies.

3. Promulgate without delay democratic freedom—freedom of assembly, expression, the press, worship, trade, and so on.

4. Root out all vestiges of the fascist and militarist dictatorial regime.

5. Stop all persecution and repression and raiding operations.

6. Dissolve all nepotist organizations, all forms of control, Republican Youth organizations, and other paramilitary organizations of youth, women, students and pupils, and public employees.

7. Immediately stop forcible conscription and militarization of youth, women, and public servants.

8. Cancel all kinds of unjustified taxes." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), pp. 353-54.)*

7 November-- Radio Liberation expresses the NLF view of the relevance of Soviet revolutionary experience for the "exploited peoples": "From the October Revolution the South Vietnamese people have learned many significant lessons. First of all it was a national liberation revolution. It showed oppressed and colonized peoples the path of struggle for self-liberation. It revealed the weaknesses of a backward nation, but when the people united solidly, they had surprising strength and incomparable intelligence and thereby were able to deter the capitalists and imperialists who banded together armed with modern weapons. The October Revolution is a shining example of how the spirit of enduring pain, the spirit of self-sufficiency, heroic sacrifice, and unshakable faith can combine to create faith and an example for all oppressed peoples." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), pp. 339-40.)*

8-17 November-- On 17 November, Radio Hanoi broadcasts the first really serious political statement by the National Liberation Front since the ouster of Diem. These "6 demands" had been adopted on 8 November by the NLF Central Committee. The broadcast notes that the "military putsch of 1 November set for the South Vietnamese people a number of urgent problems which any

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Vietnamese patriot is concerned with. That is, the danger of the present war being expanded with deeper and deeper aggression of the U.S. imperialists. That is, the danger of the dictatorial regime being maintained in a new form and with new elements." In this situation, the NLF demands that the following conditions be met:

"1. Unconditionally abolish the dictatorial and fascist regime of Ngo Dinh Diem as a whole, including the U.S. dependent lines, the anticommunist policies which mean antipeople policies, the dictatorial fascist and war policies, the reactionary policies in general in internal and external affairs, the reactionary political organizations under such labels as "Labor and Human Dignity Organization," "National Revolutionary Movement," "Women's Solidarity Movement," "Association of Victims of Communism," "Association of War Martyrs Families," "Republican Youth and Women," the network of policemen and secret agents, and so on, which constitute the tools to manipulate, control, and suppress the people, the "strategic hamlets, quarters, and sectors," the policies of militarizing youths and women, the antipopular laws such as law 10-59, the fascist law concerning the press, the emergency order, the order on mobilization and requisition, and so on. Release all political detainees regardless of tendency. Bring out in the open the crimes of the U.S.-Diem regime and bring to trial and duly punish those who perpetrated bloody crimes against the people.

2. Carry out without delay real and broad democracy, in which freedom of thought, expression, the press, organization, assembly, demonstration, trade union; freedom to set up parties, political, social, culture, and professional organizations; freedom of movement, trade, religion, and worship, corporal liberties are guaranteed by law for the entire people, without any discrimination.

   Stop the persecution, arrest, and detention of patriots and opposition individuals and parties; cancel the barbarous prison regime, especially torture, penitence, brain washing, and ill treatment of prisoners. Refrain from setting up in South Vietnam any form of dictatorial regime, either nepotic and militarist or set up by a group or party, and from carrying out a policy of monoparty or monoreligion, a policy of dictatorship concerning thoughts, politics, religion, and economy.

3. Put an immediate end to the U.S. aggression in South Vietnam, withdraw all U.S. advisers from the Republican Army units and military and civilian branches, in an advance

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toward withdrawing from South Vietnam all troops and military personnel of the United States, including the military command of Paul D. Harkins, weapons and other war means. The U.S. imperialists must respect South Vietnam's independence and sovereignty, and must not interfere in its internal affairs. The U.S. Embassy must halt spying activities to foment trouble in South Vietnam. South Vietnam must enjoy complete sovereignty in all political, military, economic, and cultural fields, in internal as well as in foreign relations. It must not be dependent on any country whatsoever and must enjoy an international position on equal footing with other countries. Only on such a basis can the relations between South Vietnam and the United States be normalized and the interests and honor of the latter in South Vietnam be guaranteed.

4. Carry out the policy of an independent, democratic, and rational economy; gradually raise the people's living standard in an advance toward eliminating unemployment and poverty. Cancel all harsh economic laws, recognize freedom of business, and trade; abolish completely all kinds of exacting taxes, supplementary taxes, and forcible money collections; reduce other taxes and cut fines. Guarantee and encourage the national economy, check the influx of foreign goods which upset the South Vietnam market. Abolish the monopoly of the U.S. imperialists and the Diem family. Increase wages of workers, armymen, public servants, and private enterprise employees.

5. Stop at once terrorist raids, strafings, and operations; and the use of chemical poison, toxic gas, and napalm bombs; generally speaking, end the war; restore peace and security and stabilize the situation in the countryside and the other part of South Vietnam; stop bloodshed among the Vietnamese people. Halt pressganging, demobilize the soldiers of the Republican Army whose military terms have expired, and let them return to their families and earn their living. We loudly declare that 18 years of war is more than sufficient! There is no reason to drag on the state of mourning on our soil merely because of the ambition of the warlike U.S. imperialists and their followers.

6. The parties concerned in South Vietnam [should] negotiate with one another to reach a cease-fire and solve the important problems of the nation, to stabilize the basic internal and external policies, with a view to reaching free general elections to elect state organs and to form a national coalition government composed of representatives of all forces, parties, tendencies, and strata of the South Vietnamese

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> people. South Vietnam, once independent, will carry out a policy of neutrality, will not adhere to any military bloc, and will not let any foreign country station troops or establish bases in South Vietnam. It will accept aid from all countries regardless of political regime and establish friendly relations on an equal footing with all countries. South Vietnam respects the sovereignty of all countries and is ready to form together with the Kingdom of Cambodia and Laos a neutral zone on the Indochinese peninsula."

The theme of reunification is once again reiterated in a rather conservative manner: "Concerning the reunification of Vietnam, as was expounded many times by the NFLSV, the Vietnam Fatherland Front, and the DRV Government, it will be realized step by step on a voluntary basis, with consideration [given] to the characteristics of each zone, with equality, and without annexation of one zone by the other." *(Text of the NLF Statement may be found in George M. Kahin and John W. Lewis, The United States in Vietnam (New York: Dial Press, 1967), pp. 399-402.)*

13 November-- The National Liberation Front broadcasts an appeal to the military junta that has overthrown Diem. It states that "the coup promoters are still able to change what one calls their fate, and they still have enough time to replan their future—a future which will be brilliant, which will have no more nightmares—if they draw from the scenes of the ruins in Saigon a useful lesson, if they know how to rely on the people's strength to resolutely separate themselves from the control of the U.S. imperialists..." *(Foreign Broadcasts Information Service, Daily Report, 13 November 1963, pp. KKK 4.)*

16 November-- Pathet Lao leader General Sinkapo Chounramany and neutralist General Kong Le informally agree to a cease-fire in the Plaine des Jarres. A similar attempt to establish a truce the previous April had failed. Also in November, the Chinese press agency Hsinhua reports that Prince Souphanouvong has demanded the withdrawal of right-wing troops from the Plaine des Jarres. According to this broadcast heard in Tokyo, Souphanouvong has charged that Phoumi Nosavan is "unwilling to solve the Laotian question peacefully." It is claimed that right-wing troops have carried out mopping-up operations on Pathet Lao-held territories, thus raising tensions in the contested areas. *(New York Times, 17 November 1963, pp. 1 and 24.)*

20-22 November-- On 20 November, Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi pledges that his country will give Cambodia "resolute support" in its "just and patriotic struggle against imperialism." On the

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following day, the Chinese Communist Government offers its "all-out support" if Cambodia has to repel an "armed invasion instigated by the United States and its vassals." On 22 November, Cambodian Chief of State Sihanouk states that China is Cambodia's best friend, but that his country will not become a satellite of China. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 130.)*

21 November-- Pravda announces that the DRV has sent a telegram to the co-chairmen of the Geneva Conference protesting against the "sending by the U.S. government of warships of the American Seventh Fleet into the...territorial waters of South Vietnam." It notes that the DRV has requested that the co-chairmen (Britain and the Soviet Union) "require the U.S. government to withdraw these ships from the coastal waters of South Vietnam, to halt the aggressive war against the South Vietnamese people, to withdraw American troops and to remove military equipment." The Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs supports this request and proposes to distribute the DRV telegram among the participating governments in the 1954 Geneva Conference. *("Stop War Against South Vietnamese People—In USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs", trans. DES, Pravda, 21 November 1963, p. 3.)*

24 November-- The Cambodian Government continues to express fears concerning violations of its boundaries and sovereignty. On this day, it formally requests the USSR and the United Kingdom as co-chairmen of the 1954 Geneva Conference on Indochina to convene a 14-nation conference in a neutral Asian capital in order to consider increasing the resources of the International Control Commission in Cambodia to better assure the neutralization of that country. The United States temporarily reserves judgment on the request for such a conference. *(Department of State, American Foreign Policy, Current Documents, 1963 (Washington: GPO, 1967), p. 742n.)*

November-- The Soviet journal International Affairs states that the 1 November coup in Saigon "in no way alters the programme of basic national tasks confronting the people of South Viet-Nam. The dictatorial junta which has replaced Diem's dictatorship has set as its task, not the fight for independence and union with North Viet-Nam on the basis of the Geneva 1954 Agreements, but continuation of the criminal war against the Vietnamese people in the interests of the U.S. monopolies in the south of the country. The people of South Viet-Nam will continue to fight against this anti-popular policy under the leadership of the National Front until they achieve final victory." The article claims that the NLF is the country's "most representative political organization", currently controlling three-quarters of the territory and half the population of South

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Vietnam. It describes the Front's structure and composition:

"...It now consists of more than 20 civilian, military and religious organisations, including three major political parties (Radical-Socialist Party, Democratic Party, and the Revolutionary People's Party of Viet-Nam), the revolutionary youth organisation, the people's armed self-defence forces, the Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee, the Peace Committee, the Autonomous Nationalities Committee, associations of Buddhists, Catholics, Hoa Haoists, etc. The total number of members and sympathisers now runs to more than 7 million.

Day-to-day leadership is provided by a Central Committee consisting of over 30 representatives of member parties, political and religious organisations, patriotic officials from the liberated areas and areas temporarily occupied by the enemy, national minorities, etc. Twenty-one seats, including three seats of deputy chairmen, are reserved for organisations which are unable to take part in the activity of the Front. Nguyen Huu Tho, an active fighter for Viet-Nam's freedom and independence, is the unanimously elected chairman of the National Front's Central Committee.

South Viet-Nam is divided into seven military zones; in each of these there is a regional committee through which the Central Committee conducts military operations."

The Soviets claim that "[i]n the first two years of the National Front's operations, the peasants recaptured from the Diem forces more than 630,000 hectares of land and in areas controlled by National Front Committees land rent was reduced summarily." As to the administration of the "liberated areas": "No administrative national organs to govern the liberated areas have yet been set up. The Central Committee of the National Front intends soon to set up a provisional national committee, and is having consultations with representatives of other parties and organisations at home and abroad which are opposed to the regime. Meanwhile, people's associations which elect provisional local committees operate in the liberated areas." *(F. Khalin, "National Front for the Liberation of South Viet-Nam", International Affairs, (Moscow), no. 11 (November 1963), p. 102.)*

December-- A US Department of State "Working Paper on the North Vietnamese Role in the War in South Vietnam", which is based upon information that is not drawn from sensitive sources but which is said to be further confirmed by such "sensitive intelligence", states that in this month Hanoi probably took the decision to commit units of the North Vietnamese Army to the South. This is shortly following the ouster of Diem, when it became clear that the overthrow had not produced any significant defections to the

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Communist cause. Starting in early 1964, Hanoi begins to develop its infiltration trails through Laos into a large-scale supply route, capable of handling continuous truck traffic to South Vietnam. A large group of North Vietnamese Army construction battalions in at least three "Combined Forces" (Binh Tram 3, 4, and 5) is deployed in the area by 1964 to oversee the development of the roadnet. Some regular NVA units begin preparing for infiltration as early as April 1964. Several prisoners from the 99th Regiment of the 325th Division testify that their unit was recalled in that month from duty in Laos and that back in North Vietnam the 95th underwent special military and political training for operations in the South. Hanoi also begins to form new regimental-sized units for dispatch to the South. The 32d Regiment is activated sometime in the spring of 1964, with personnel drawn from a number of established units and with draftees from the Son Tay and Xuan Mai infiltration centers. *(Congressional Record, 9 May 1968, pp. H-3604-10.)*

December-- In a speech before the 9th Plenum of the Third Central Committee of the Lao Dong Party, Le Duan takes a militant pro-Chinese stand and stresses that the socialist world is sufficiently stronger than the capitalist camp to be able to encourage revolutionary struggle without fear of the enemy resorting to nuclear war. He cautions against falling into a "defensive strategy" by becoming overly dependent on nuclear weapons. Mao Tse-tung is credited with having originated the theory of peasant revolution in underdeveloped countries and with having provided important tactical advice for guerrillas in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The Lao Dong First Secretary states that these areas of the world "form the weakest link in the imperialist-capitalist chain, where the imperialist-capitalist front can most easily be breached...As it now stands, revolution is in an offensive position. The strategy of revolution should be an offensive strategy [relying heavily on revolutionary violence]...By doing so imperialism will be repulsed step by step...until it is completely destroyed." The general tone and timing of the speech suggest that it may have been intended to provoke Moscow into greater commitments to the growing insurgency in South Vietnam. If so, the effort apparently failed. Promises of substantial aid for the Viet Cong were evidently not made when Le Duan led a North Vietnamese mission to Moscow in early 1964. *(Le Duan, Some Questions Concerning the International Tasks of Our Party, (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1964.)*

December-- Bernard Fall, writing in a later period about Hanoi's relations with Moscow and Peking, states in his book The Two Viet-Nams that "having thrown away leverage against its Sino-Soviet backers by turning its back on the outside world, North

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Viet-Nam must seek to preserve its identity within the Communist bloc by a dangerous game of playing off the demands of both its mighty sponsors while extracting aid from each. In this, the North Vietnamese leadership—notably Ho Chi Minh himself—has displayed uncommon skill. How delicate this tightrope walk can be is revealed best in small things: In December, 1963, Hanoi was host for the soccer tournament of the "Armies of the Socialist Countries," which included both the U.S.S.R. and Albania. And fate would have it that the final elimination match pitted the Soviet team against the Albanians. Radio Hanoi stated that the event took place—but in its English-language broadcasts, it sedulously avoided mentioning who won the match. On the openly ideological plane, the ninth session of the Lao-Dong's Central Committee, in December, 1963, also toed Ho's adopted line in its final communiqué, which cautioned Party members '...to oppose revisionism and right-wing opportunism [i.e.the Soviet Union's position], which constitute the main danger, and at the same time oppose dogmatism and sectarianism [i.e. Red China's position], and to contribute to enhancing cohesion and unity within the Socialist camp...'" *(Bernard Fall, The Two Viet-Nams (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967), pp. 392-93.)*

12-14 December-- On 12 December, Norodom Sihanouk orders the Cambodian Ambassador to the United States to close the Embassy and return home. On the following day, the US Ambassador to Cambodia is recalled for consultation. An announcement is also made over the Cambodian Government radio expressing satisfaction at the deaths of Ngo Dinh Diem, Thai Premier Sarit Thanarat, and "the great boss of these aggressors." The United States and Britain protest this reference to President Kennedy. While the Cambodian Government denies that reference has been made to President Kennedy, Sihanouk on 14 December orders the closing of the Cambodian embassy in London. *(CQ Background, China and US Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 131.)*

18 December-- In a note from the Chinese Foreign Ministry, Peking supports Cambodia's proposal for an international conference to assure its neutrality. *(New York Times, 19 December 1963, p. 7.)*

21 December-- The White House releases a statement by US Secretary of Defense McNamara who has returned from South Vietnam. He says that his party observed the results of a very considerable rise in Viet Cong activity, an increase that began shortly after the new RVN Government was formed. The VC have successfully attacked a substantial number of strategic hamlets. This rapid expansion of VC activity was obviously intended to take advantage of the organization of the new Government. *(Public Papers of the*

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1963

Presidents, Lyndon B. Johnson, 1963-64 (Washington: GPO, 1965), v. 1, pp. 34-35n.)

27 December-- For the Chinese, the NLF served as a useful club with which to beat the Soviets in their intensifying ideological and political duel. Increasingly typical in the Chinese press are such statements as "Their [NLF] victories show that the oppressed peoples and nations must not make their liberation dependent on the 'sensibleness' of imperialism and its running dogs. They can win victory only by closing ranks and persisting in militant struggle." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 336.)*

28 December-- Pravda reports that North Vietnam has sent the co-chairmen of the Geneva Conference a letter condemning the new military regime in Saigon for continuing the war effort, creating strategic hamlets and jailing its political opponents. An accompanying statement asks the co-chairmen to "devote special attention to the serious situation" in South Vietnam and to "take effective steps to compel interested parties" to respect the 1954 Geneva Agreements. *("Letter From DRV Minister of Foreign Affairs to Co-chairmen of Geneva Conference", trans. DES, Pravda, 28 December 1963, p. 5.)*

1964

1964-- A communique drawing the military balance sheet for this year was later published by Hanoi's information services:

"From the tactics of 1963, which consisted of taking the initiative in attacking and routing the enemy's Southern forces in entire sections, the Army of Liberation passed in 1964 to the tactic of conducting an uninterrupted offensive against the enemy, and of destroying a great number of his units on battalion and company level, and depriving him of all weapons...

While in 1963 the revolutionary movement of armed struggle and its victories took place primarily in the Center, and west of Nam Bo [Cochinchina], the revolutionary armed forces of the South attacked in 1964 without respite, and won victories throughout the year in all regions, from the demarcation line to the Point of Ca Mau...

Efforts to kill Americans have developed with great vigor and on a large scale in all regions, and particularly in Saigon proper. The actions taken in February 1964 on a basketball field, in the cinemas, particularly in apartments, in front of restaurants, in garrisons; the sabotage against the American aircraft carrier Card in the port of Saigon on

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May 2, 1964; and, more recently, the bombing of the hotel of senior American officers in the very heart of Saigon, proved that the activities of the guerrilla forces have made a step forward, showing more creative and diversified means and causing panic among the aggressors, not only in the provinces but also in the cities of Hue, Da Nang, Saigon, ...i.e., in the vital centers and places where the aggressor troops are concentrated. In the first ten months of 1964 the number of American aggressors killed or wounded rose to 1,957,almost one and a half times the total number of the entire period from 1961 to 1963."

More striking than these figures (which, like most Communist statistics on such subjects, perform a rather obvious propaganda function) is the fact that a neo-Maoist revolutionary movement should justify to such an extent an emphasis on large-scale urban terrorism as a normal means of action in "guerrilla" operations. *(Jean Lacouture, Vietnam (New York: Random House, 1966), pp. 177-78.)*

1-8 January-- At the Second Congress of the National Liberation Front, NLF Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho calls for a negotiated settlement clearly and unequivocally by "a halt to the war and the withdrawal of American military forces, and negotiations by all forces and parties in South Vietnam to find a rational solution for the achievement of a policy of peace and neutrality." After charging the United States with armed intervention in South Vietnam, he states that the US wants to:

"1. Suppress the patriotic movement in South Vietnam so as to consolidate its defense line from the Mid-East to northern Asia.

2. Threaten the national liberation movement in general.

3. Draw experiences to cope with the revolution of colonial peoples..."

The mood of the Congress is one of supreme confidence, in Tho's words: "This was a congress of winners." NLF successes are stated to be the product of:

"1. The heroism of the South Vietnamese people...We began with empty hands...Violence has battled justice, and justice has won many glorious victories not because we had more guns but...because of our patriotism and our heroic mettle...

2. The solidarity and the unity of our people...Even large numbers of Chinese in Vietnam have joined us...as have overseas Vietnamese, and people of many political ideas...

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3. We have determination to win...

4. [We have] the ever broader and stronger support and sympathy of the people of the world, ...who regard our struggle as part of the struggle of progressive mankind for independence, social progress, and peace..."

(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 357.)

4 January-- Peking radio reports that Pathet Lao Prince Souphanouvong is demanding the neutralization of Vientiane and Luang Prabang, both currently policed by rightist forces, as a condition for peace talks with Premier Souvanna Phouma. *(New York Times, 4 January 1964, p. 14.)*

21 January-- The Soviet Foreign Ministry announces that it has proposed to Great Britain that the 14 nations which took part in the 1962 Conference on Laos meet again in Geneva in April to guarantee the neutrality of Cambodia. Subsequently, the Soviets renew this proposal periodically as the United Kingdom remains unresponsive. *(New York Times, 22 January 1964, p. 9.)*

23 January-- Pathet Lao troops in central Laos launch new military offensives against Royal Laotian and neutralist forces. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 133.)*

26 January-15 February-- On 26 January, DRV Foreign Minister Xuan Thuy sends Great Britain and the Soviet Union a telegram charging the United States and the Saigon authorities with using chemical poisons against the South Vietnamese populace. He asks the Geneva co-chairmen to condemn such actions. Subsequently, the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs unsuccessfully requests the British to send this telegram to the other participant governments in the 1954 Geneva Conference. *("Stop Evil Deeds—In USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs", trans. DES, Izvestia, 15 February 1964, p. 6.)*

27 January-- France establishes diplomatic relations with Communist China. The US State Department calls this action "an unfortunate step, particularly at a time when the Chinese Communists are actively promoting aggression and subversion in Southeast Asia and elsewhere." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 133.)*

28 January-- Pravda reports changes in the structure of the directing agencies and the formation of a new Central Committee of the

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National Liberation Front. At the Second Congress of the NLF, it was decided to increase the Central Committee to 60 members. In addition, in order to further flexibility in the day-to-day leadership of the national liberation struggle, a new body was created: the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Front, composed of 14 persons. Nguyen Huu Tho was re-elected Chairman of the NLF, and Huynh Tan Phat, "leader of the radical bourgeois democratic Party", was elected General Secretary of the NLF Central Committee. *("Auspicious Event", trans. DES, Pravda, 28 January 1964, p. 4.)*

31 January-- The Soviet Government newspaper Izvestia refers to the coup in Saigon designed, in the words of its perpetrator Major General Nguyen Khanh, to "save South Vietnam from neutralism." Izvestia states that "Washington's hand has again shifted some pawns on the South Vietnamese board." *(S. Kondrashov, "Washington's Handiwork", trans. DES, Izvestia, 31 January 1964, p. 1.)*

31 January-- At a press conference, President De Gaulle defends French recognition of Communist China. He also says that Southeast Asia should be neutralized. He states: "There is in Asia no political reality...that does not concern or affect China. There is neither a war nor a peace imaginable on this continent without China's being implicated in it. Thus it would be...impossible to envisage, without China, a possible neutrality agreement relating to the Southeast Asian states--a neutrality, which by definition, must be accepted by all, guaranteed on the international level, and which would exclude both armed agitations...and the various forms of external intervention; a neutrality that...seems... to be the only situation compatible with the peaceful coexistence and progress of the peoples concerned." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 134.)*

4 February-- The Democratic Republic of Vietnam has frequently suffered from excessive optimism about the course of events in the South. The overthrow of Diem was regarded by the DRV as the threshold of victory. The instability that followed reinforced this belief. Hanoi's Cuu Quoc (National Salvation) reflects this optimism: "The [GVN's] present crisis is developing amidst the patriotic movement of our people [who are] fighting the aggressors and traitors in all areas, politically and militarily...Serious deterioration is developing in the army, the central and the local governments. Uprisings and secessional activities are developing...The United States cannot even find a Vietnamese traitor to unite the counterrevolutionary forces..." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 326.)*

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7 February-- The Chinese press agency Hsinhua (New China) reports that the Neo Lao Hak Xat has broadcast that "[a]ny proposal to the I.C.C....without the unanimous approval of the three sides, will be null and void." In effect, this statement is an announcement that the Pathet Lao will block any ICC attempt to investigate cease-fire violations. *(New York Times, 8 February 1964, p. 2.)*

10 February-- The NLF asserted after Diem's fall that the war continued only because of US efforts. Post-Diem governments remained viable only because of United States support. Thus, the withdrawal of American forces was a prerequisite to any settlement. Nguyen Huu Tho in a Radio Liberation broadcast spells out the NLF policy that remained in force throughout subsequent events: "The United States [must]...end its aggressive war in South Vietnam, and the various parties and forces there [must] negotiate with one another to find a reasonable settlement in the interests of the Fatherland on the basis of peace, independence, and neutrality...The source of the present serious situation is the U.S. imperialist aggressive war and the dictatorial policy of their lackeys...The only obstacle to stabilization and the ending of bloodshed is U.S. imperialism." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), pp. 360-61.)*

11 February-- Two Lao Dong newspapers publish a Government statement that says that the Democratic Republic of Vietnam will never accept the neutralization of its territory. The statement also warns that if the United States attacks North Vietnam, as "certain military circles" have proposed, Communist China will come to the DRV's aid. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 134.)*

11 February-- Cambodian Prime Minister Sihanouk charges that two South Vietnamese planes have attacked a Cambodian village and killed five people. He says that the United States is partially responsible for the incident since it has "overarmed" South Vietnam. Once again, he demands an international conference on Cambodian neutrality and warns that if the Americans remain "passive" about this issue, Cambodia "would be compelled to modify our neutrality status and would have to consider assistance pacts with certain great friendly countries." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 134.)*

13 February-- Chinese support for the NLF was full scale and militant. Ch'ien Ta-wei, the Chinese delegate to the International Union of Students Committee for Solidarity with South Vietnam meeting in Budapest, delivers a militant speech that ends with a call for the IUS to:

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"1. Actively unfold extensive activities in support of the struggle of the South Vietnamese people and students; expose the crimes of the U.S. imperialists in South Vietnam and their slaughter of the South Vietnamese people.

2. Mobilize the students of all countries to render to South Vietnamese students substantial political and material help, including weapons.

3. Intensify propaganda and publicize the development of the struggle of the South Vietnamese people and students, their experiences and heroic deeds, the significance of their struggle, and the contributions of their struggle to the defense of world peace.

4. Unfold extensive mass struggles for students in all countries against the U.S. imperialists, thereby giving powerful support to the patriotic anti-U.S. struggle of the South Vietnamese people and students.

5. Resolutely condemn the U.S. criminal act of sending a [U.N.] inspection team to South Vietnam, which was an infringement of the sovereignty of the South Vietnamese people and an insult to the people of South Vietnam and Asia." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), pp. 337-38.)*

15 February-- One of the NLF goals in administering the "liberated areas" was to achieve economic self-sufficiency. Should this target be reached, then the "liberated area" could cut all economic ties with the rest of the country without damage to its own economy. Radio Liberation lists the year's production tasks: "to step up thriftiness and production, reinforce our finances, reduce people's contributions, and create material wealth with which to fight the enemy economically...If production is developed, we will no longer be dependent on the enemy for the supply of goods, ...will gradually build an autonomous and independent economy...That is our objective..." Later broadcasts during 1964 assert that good progress is being made in this direction. *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 303.)*

15 February-- Pravda announces that a high-level North Vietnamese delegation has visited Moscow from 31 January to 10 February, meeting with such important Soviet political figures as Nikita Khrushchev and Communist Party Secretaries M. A. Suslov, Yu V. Andropov, L. F. Ilyichev and B. N. Ponomarev. The DRV delegation was headed by Lao Dong First Secretary Le Duan and included Politburo member and Central Committee Secretary Le Duc Tho.

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The communique issued on their departure notes that a "frank and useful exchange of opinions took place on current international questions and on problems of the world Communist and workers' movement, as well as on questions relating to the further strengthening and development of fraternal friendship and cooperation between the peoples and parties of the two countries." The phrasing of the communique would seem to indicate that substantial differences of opinion arose on a variety of matters and were not resolved during the course of the discussions. Specifically, no new pledge of Soviet aid is revealed. *("Communique on Meeting in Moscow of Representatives of Communist Party of the Soviet Union and of the Vietnam Worker's Party", trans. DES, Pravda, 15 February 1964, p. 1.)*

26 February-- During this period of relative Soviet inactivity in Southeast Asian affairs, Moscow's pledges of support for the national liberation movement in South Vietnam remain notably unspecific. Tass reports that the Soviet people "follow with profound sympathy the just national liberation struggle of the South Vietnamese people and will render the necessary assistance and support to this struggle." *(Rodger Swearingen and Hammond Rolph, Communism in Vietnam (Chicago: American Bar Association, 1967), p. 168.)*

4 March-- If Moscow's public statements during this period remained noncommittal in terms of rendering aid to the national liberation movement in South Vietnam, Communist China's declarations were no less so. In spite of continued hints from Hanoi, Peking is careful not to make any mention of possible Chinese intervention on behalf of the DRV. A People's Daily editorial, for instance, seeks to reassure the North Vietnamese and others who might find themselves in a similar situation that the struggles being conducted throughout Asia, Africa and Latin America would divert the United States from concentrating the full weight of its power on the war in Vietnam. In the absence of an attack on North Vietnam, the existing conditions of the struggle in the South favor the Communists in the long run. *(Harold C. Hinton, Communist China in World Politics (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966), pp. 361-62.)*

9 March-- Norodom Sihanouk charges the United States with having torpedoed his plans for an international conference to establish Cambodia's neutrality. He accuses the United States, Laos, Thailand, and South Vietnam with having conspired to partition his country and warns that he will negotiate border agreements with the "future masters of Viet Nam and Laos," the North Vietnamese and the Pathet Lao. *(CQ Background, China and US Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 136.)*

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14 March-- Major General Lon Nol, head of a Cambodian military delegation visiting Peking, is told by Chinese Communist Chief of Staff Lo Jui-ching that Peking would give Cambodia full support should that country "encounter armed invasion instigated by the United States and its vassal states." Cambodia, he declares, is not alone in her struggle. *(New York Times, 15 March 1964, pp. 1 and 21.)*

15 March-- Prince Sihanouk receives a planeload of arms from Communist China. At the airport, he tells the Chinese ambassador: "Since our liberation from conditional American aid, our two armies have been able fraternally to extend hands. This is not conceived, as Thailand maintains, to menace the peace and encourage Cambodia to become aggressive. Our only worry is to have sufficient military force to dissuade instigators of imperialistic war who menace the Cambodian peace." *(CQ Background, China and US Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 136.)*

16 March-- Prince Sihanouk voices dissatisfaction with North Vietnam and announces that he is renewing contacts with South Vietnam. He states that Cambodia will extend her hands to whichever of the two Vietnams "is less demanding with respect to our country" and complains that the DRV's attitude on the Vietnam-Cambodia border dispute is "as vague as the Anglo-Saxons'." *(New York Times, 17 March 1964, p. 4.)*

27 March-- After being informed by Norodom Sihanouk that South Vietnamese troops have attacked a Cambodian border village killing 17 people, Nikita Khrushchev sends a telegram to the Chief of State expressing his indignation over this "brutal act of aggression." He assures Sihanouk that any Cambodian move to take its case before the UN Security Council would have Soviet support. He adds that he has once again advised Britain that the convocation of an international conference on Cambodian neutrality is "imperative". *(New York Times, 28 March 1964, p. 2.)*

27 March-- At a Special Political Conference, Ho Chi Minh discusses the liberation movement in the South. He notes that "[e]ven among the American ruling circles there are people who begin to see that the United States...[has] been driven into a blind alley." He condemns the creation of Malaysia as a neocolonialist plot to threaten Indonesia and denies that the DRV is supplying the southern guerrillas with weapons. Warning against any US or South Vietnamese attempts to "march to the North," he states that any "venture to lay hands on the North" will provoke resolute opposition, not only from the Vietnamese people but from "progressive" people the world over, including those in the socialist countries and the United States. In sum, Ho states that the "international significance" of the struggle in the South is that once the Americans' "special war" has

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failed in Vietnam it will fail elsewhere as well. *(Ho Chi Minh, "Report at the Special Political Conference", Against U.S. Aggression, For National Salvation (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1967), pp. 44-48.)*

April-- The Lao Dong Central Committee issues a directive to all Party echelons concerning support for the war in the South: "When the forces of the enemy and the plots of the enemy are considered, it is realized that the cadres, party members, and people in North Viet-Nam must...increase their sense of responsibility in regard to the South Viet-Nam revolution by giving positive and practical support to South Viet-Nam in every field." *(Department of State Publication 7839, Aggression From the North (Washington: GPO, 1965), p. 21.)*

4 April-- Laotian Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma, on a visit to Peking, appeals for assistance in bringing peace to his country. Chou En-lai replies by blaming Laotian difficulties on the United States and demanding that US forces be withdrawn from South Vietnam. *(CQ Background, China and US Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 137.)*

13 April-- In an interview with Australian Communist journalist Wilfred Burchett, Ho Chi Minh declares that if the United States and South Vietnam attempt to carry the war into North Vietnam, the North Vietnamese have "powerful friends ready to help." He comments that "[a]t the present juncture, I think that President de Gaulle's suggestions on the neutralization of this part of Southeast Asia including South Vietnam—meaning also by this word the liquidation of military bases and foreign interference—deserves serious attention." Ho then indicates that he would insist on France's supporting the "peaceful unification" of Vietnam. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 139.)*

19 April-2 May-- On 19 April, the Laotian coalition government under Souvanna Phouma is ousted by a right-wing coup. On this same day, the United States, Great Britain, and France denounce the coup as a violation of the 1962 Geneva Agreements. The following day, the Soviet Union follows suit. On 22 April, however, Communist China charges that the United States has engineered the overthrow. On 23 April, the military junta announces that Souvanna has been reinstated as Prime Minister and will form a new coalition government. On 2 May, Souvanna announces the formation of a coalition of neutralists and rightists under his leadership. While these actions are in progress, the Pathet Lao launch heavy attacks on

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Royal Laotian and neutralist forces on 27 April. Meanwhile, Britain and the Soviet Union seek to arrange a cease-fire. *(CQ Background, China and US Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 138.)*

24-25 April-- On 24 April, Souk Vongsak, Secretary of State for the Pathet Lao declares that his group opposes Souvanna Phouma's agreeing to right-wing demands to enlarge the coalition government. He says that the Pathet Lao will not deal with the junta—that it is an illegal body whose aim is "to sabotage the policy of peace and neutrality in Laos" and to destroy the coalition. The following day, Prince Souphanouvong states that "civil war on a large scale is very likely." He charges that the coup was planned by the United States. This broadcast, which originates from Peking, mentions that Souphanouvong has sent a protest to the co-chairmen of the Geneva Conference on Laos demanding that they intervene to safeguard Government officials and free all neutralists arrested during the coup and its aftermath. *(New York Times, 25 and 26 April 1964, pp. 1 and 21 respectively.)*

1 May-- Britain and the Soviet Union, as co-chairmen of the 1962 Geneva Conference, formally condemn the Laotian coup of 19 April. In a declaration issued by Foreign Ministers R. A. Butler and A. A. Gromyko, the two governments call on Laotian leaders and all interested governments to adhere strictly to the 1962 Geneva settlement. In addition, the Foreign Ministers call for a resumption of talks between the three Laotian factions. *(New York Times, 2 May 1964, p. 5.)*

May-- In an interview for the American journal Minority of One, Ho Chi Minh thanks those US citizens who have "courageously raised their voices, staged demonstrations, exposed the criminal policy of aggression...and expressed their support for the just struggle of the patriotic forces in South Vietnam." He calls on them to "resolutely struggle against the bellicose and aggressive militarists in your own country...Demand an immediate end to the dirty war in South Vietnam!" *(Ho Chi Minh, "Reply to the American Monthly Minority of One", Against U.S. Aggression, For National Salvation (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1967), pp. 55-57.)*

5 May-- Hanoi continues to publicly refer to the People's Revolutionary Party as a purely indigenous southern organization, rather than as an extension of the Lao Dong. A Nhan Dan editorial explains the formation of the PRP in the following terms: "The South Vietnam working class has clearly realized that to defend the people's, and its own, interests it must have a

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leading party, closely allied with the working peasants, broadly united with the other sections of the people... The founding of the South Vietnam National Liberation Front and the birth of the Vietnam People's Revolutionary Party, a party of the South Vietnam working class and laboring people and at the same time of all patriotic South Vietnamese, are historic events on the road to victory of the national democratic revolution in South Vietnam." For the PRP membership views on this subject, see the entry for 7 December 1961. *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 140.)*

5 May-- The Soviet Union announces its support for a proposal by Prince Sihanouk to reconvene the Geneva Conference because of the turmoil in Laos. *(New York Times, 6 May 1964, p. 7.)*

13-26 May-- Chinese Communist Foreign Minister Chen Yi sends letters to Great Britain and the Soviet Union charging that the United States has promoted the Laotian military coup of 19 April in an effort "to completely undermine the Laotian government of National Union, rekindle the flares of civil war in Laos, and to create the division of Laos." He proposes a new Geneva Conference on the "entire Indochina question." When Britain on 19 May asks Communist China to use its influence to restrain the Pathet Lao and end the spreading hostilities in Laos, Peking subsequently (on 26 May) refuses and again charges that the US is guilty of aggression in Indochina. The Chinese now specifically propose that foreign ministers of the Geneva Conference nations meet at Phnom Penh, Cambodia, to confer on the Southeast Asian situation and that they address the question of Laos first. *(CQ Background, China and US Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 139.)*

19 May-- The Soviet Union joins Cambodia before the UN Security Council condemning US aggression against that Southeast Asian country. Soviet representative Nikolai T. Fedorenko charges that South Vietnamese violations of Cambodia's borders have American sanction since the US military supervises all ARVN operations. The Soviets and the Cambodians accuse the United States of blocking proposals for international supervision of Cambodia's frontiers. In reply, US representative Charles Yost states: "The United States has never refused such inspection. In particular, my Government is entirely prepared to consider any reasonable proposal for new and effective machinery under the United Nations to help stabilize the situation along the Cambodian-Vietnamese frontier." He adds that

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"[i]t is clear from the very nature of what is going on in Vietnam that these events are disconnected incidents having nothing in common save their origin in efforts by the Government of Vietnam to suppress military units of the Vietcong, which are in armed conflict with the Government of Vietnam and which attempt to find a safe haven on the soil of Cambodia." *(New York Times, 20 May 1964, p. 8.)*

20 May-- France proposes reconvening of the 14-nation Conference on Laos in Geneva. Subsequently, this proposal is rejected by the United States and the United Kingdom and endorsed by the Soviet Union, Poland, Cambodia, India, and Communist China. *(Marcus G. Raskin and Bernard B. Fall, eds., The Viet-Nam Reader (New York: Random House, 1965), p. 395.)*

21 May-- A US State Department spokesman reveals that the United States is working with the Royal Lao Government in response to its request for assistance in supplementing its information on the intentions and dispositions of attacking forces. In view of the inability of the International Control Commission to obtain adequate information, US reconnaissance flights have been authorized. On 6 June, the Department of State further announces that a US reconnaissance plane has been shot down by ground fire in the Plaine des Jarres region. These flights have been undertaken at the request of Premier Souvanna Phouma in order "to observe the activities and movements of the forces which are invading, attacking and fighting in Laos." On 7 June, the State Department announces that an FA-8 aircraft from the KITTY HAWK has been shot down by ground fire in the area of the Plaine des Jarres. On 11 June, the State Department reports that the reconnaissance flights will continue, following a meeting between Ambassador Leonard Unger and Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma on the previous day. "We share the conviction of the Lao Government that the refusal of the Communists to allow any effective functioning by the ICC combined with Pathet Lao-Viet Minh recent actions of aggression has created an urgent and continuing need for reliable information on eastern Laos. It is for that reason that we agreed to undertake reconnaissance flights." *(Jules Davids, ed., Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1964 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations), pp. 218-20.)*

25 May-- Communist China denounces a US suggestion that the United Nations play a peace-keeping role along Cambodia's border with South Vietnam. *(New York Times, 26 May 1964, p. 3.)*

25 May-- In an official "Observer" article in the Soviet Government newspaper Izvestia, Moscow charges the United States with shipping arms to the right-wing forces in Laos and warns that any

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attempt by Washington to transfer to that country its "bankrupt" policy in South Vietnam would "create a dangerous new seat of war." The article says that Souvanna Phouma should be supported in his efforts to resume negotiations with the political wing of the Pathet Lao. Such talks between neutralists and leftists, it is stated, should be aimed at restoring the coalition government (that existed prior to the coup) to its "normal activities". The article adds that this is the "only way" to cope with the present situation in Laos. The Soviet newspaper also charges that with US help the right-wing forces are trying to "liquidate" the neutralist faction by merging it with the rightist group and by dissolving the neutralist armed forces. This, it is asserted, would lead to civil war. In general, the Izvestia statement is rather moderate in tone and would seem to indicate that Moscow is interested in returning to the situation as it existed before the abortive 19 April coup. That action and subsequent events have driven the neutralists and rightists closer together and served to isolate the Pathet Lao. In addition, the Soviets may be expected to be anxious to avoid anything that might cause the Americans to take a more direct hand in Laos. Thus, negotiations between leftists and neutralists with a view towards restoring the coalition government and the strengthening of that government by the reconvening of the Geneva Conference constitute the Soviet goals of the moment. *(New York Times, 26 May 1964, pp. 1 and 2.)*

26 May-- "Reliable British sources" disclose that the Soviets are no longer providing logistical support for the Pathet Lao forces. This support is reported to have been taken over about a month ago by the North Vietnamese and (presumably) the Chinese. These "sources" note that as long as Moscow was providing aid it had a lever of influence over the Pathet Lao which it could use. That lever now appears to have largely disappeared. *(New York Times, 27 May 1964, p. 3.)*

30 May-19 June-- The NLF attitude towards the United Nations changes abruptly (note, e.g., entries for 11 September 1963) as that organization moves to send a three-man team on a 45-day visit to the Cambodia-South Vietnam frontier to investigate Prince Sihanouk's complaints of border violations by the ARVN. On 30 May, the NLF Radio Liberation states: "The U.S. imperialists and their lackeys grind out their obsolete propaganda. They utter slanders about the patriotic forces of South Vietnam committing encroachments on the Cambodian frontier. Now in the United Nations...they have sent their lackeys, the Saigon rebel authorities, to the Security Council...to cover up the true facts...and have announced their aim of sending many units of foreign troops under the label of the United Nations

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to the Cambodian border area to infringe openly upon the sovereignty, independence, and territory of South Vietnam ...We hope that responsible men in the United Nations will take a positive attitude and check in time the schemes and illegal maneuvers of the United States..." A commentary two days later denies the right of the UN team to enter Vietnam and indicates that the NLF would physically oppose such an entry: "Our troops and our people will not allow anyone to come to our country without the consent of the Front...The South Vietnamese people know only their legal representative, the NLFSV, and listen only to the Front's orders." On 14 June, Radio Liberation notes: "This indicates that the United Nations has begun to intervene officially in the Southeast Asia question, particularly in the Vietnamese problem. To say it another way, the ICC is becoming a thing of the past and the 1954 Geneva accords are becoming a relic." Moreover, the NLF now seemed to reject the very concept of the UN as being inimical to its interests. On 19 June, Radio Liberation states: "In the light of events in Korea and the Congo, the peoples of the world have come to realize what the so-called intervention of the U.N. organization really means and will never forget the monstrous crimes committed under its flags by the U.N. imperialists..." This is followed by a detailed statement on the Front's attitude towards the UN which seems to deny any present or future role for that organization in attaining peace in Vietnam:

"In view of the aforementioned situation, the NLFSV, in the name of 14 million South Vietnamese people, solemnly make the following statement to public opinion at home and abroad:

1. The fact that the U.S. imperialists take advantage of the U.N. Security Council's resolution to pursue their interventionist and aggressive policy in South Vietnam and Cambodia is contrary to the 1954...agreements...

2. There is absolutely no basis for any organ of the United Nations to intervene in the internal affairs of the South Vietnamese people, or of any people of the Indochinese countries. All direct or indirect activities of the United Nations aimed at carrying out the U.S. imperialists' policy to intervene...will constitute violations of the sovereignty of these countries and threats to their security, independence, and territorial integrity. It will be held fully responsible for the grave consequences ensuing from these activities.

3. Because it actually controls and administers nine tenths of the South Vietnamese territory along the South Vietnamese-

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Cambodian border, the NLFSV will not allow any U.N. organ to come to its liberated area for investigations. The U.S. henchmen in South Vietnam cannot represent the South Vietnamese people nor are they qualified to express, in the name of the South Vietnamese people, views at the United Nations...

4. For both the present and the future, the NLFSV will neither recognize nor accept any responsibility for or task contained in any conclusion drawn by the U.N. Security Council's fact-finding mission..." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), pp. 473-74.)*

31 May-- The Chinese press agency quotes a Pathet Lao broadcast as saying that Souvanna Phouma is a prisoner of the United States and its "lackeys". Since he is now "toeing the line" of the Americans, Souvanna can no longer be considered Premier of the "legitimate National Union Government." The Pathet Lao radio also denounces US and British proposals for ambassadorial consultations in Vientiane of the countries participating in the 1962 Geneva Conference. *(New York Times, 1 June 1964, p. 3.)*

4 June-27 July-- The United Nations Security Council acts on the Cambodian complaint with regard to violations of its territory by the Republic of Vietnam. It decides to send a mission composed of representatives of Brazil, the Ivory Coast, and Morocco to the two countries to consider and recommend measures that may prevent reoccurrence of such incidents. In its report on 27 July, the Mission recommends that Cambodia and South Vietnam resume diplomatic relations and that a team of United Nations observers be established to reduce tension along the border shared by the two countries. Both the United States and South Vietnam support this proposal. The Cambodian Government, however, terms it "unacceptable to Cambodia" and asks that its original complaint "should be placed on file." The matter is thereupon dropped at the request of Cambodia. *(Jules Davids, ed., Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1964 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations), pp. 238-39.)*

6 June-- Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko replies to a 26 May message from his Chinese counterpart, Chen Yi. Gromyko assures Chen that the Soviet Union is continuing its efforts to convene a 14-nation conference on Laos. Excerpts of Gromyko's letter published by Tass on 10 June make no reference to a recent Polish proposal, supported by the USSR, for a six-nation conference, to exclude China, North Vietnam, and the United States. *("Ensure Peace for People of Laos—A. A. Gromyko and Chen Yi Exchange Letters", trans. DES, Pravda, 10 June 1964, p. 3.)*

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6 June-8 July-- On 8 July, the Soviet Government newspaper Izvestia states that North Vietnamese Foreign Minister Xuan Thuy, in a telegram received 26 June, has reported "facts that, in the opinion of the D.R.V. government, attest to the intention of the U.S.A. to carry the military operations to the territory of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam." The telegram says, in part: "Various government agencies of the United States are studying plans hostile to the D.R.V. W. Rostow, chairman of the State Department's planning committee, has offered 'Rostow Plan No. 6,' which provides for the blockading, bombing and strafing of North Vietnam. Melvin Laird, a member of the House of Representatives, announced in the House Defense Appropriations Committee that 'the Johnson Administration is studying a plan for bombing communist North Vietnam.' The wire service AP reports that 50 jet bombers of the B-57B type, belonging to the Third U.S. Air Force Bomber Squadron, are flying training missions in the Philippines in connection with the possibility of a decision by the Americans to bomb objectives in North Vietnam. According to the testimony of the above-named wire service, these fliers are being briefed with intelligence data about important sites in North Vietnam, and most of the data has been collected by U-2 reconnaissance planes flying at high altitudes." Xuan Thuy states that these actions "create a serious threat to peace and safety in this area of Southeast Asia..." In response to this telegram, the Soviets deliver a draft message from the co-chairmen of the Geneva Conference to Great Britain for its consideration (and obvious rejection). This draft calls on the United States to strictly implement the 1954 Geneva Agreements, stop interfering in the internal affairs of Vietnam and withdraw its troops, military personnel and armaments from that territory. *("Stop Interference", trans. DES, Izvestia, 8 July 1964, p. 2.)*

9 June-- Premier Chou En-lai, speaking at a banquet in honor of the President of Yemen, describes the Laotian situation as "very grave indeed." He asserts that Thailand has concentrated a great number of troops on the Laotian border and that US planes have reconnoitered and bombed Pathet Lao positions on the Plaine des Jarres. Moreover, an official Peking Government statement released this same day declares that the situation in Laos can be dealt with only by a plenary meeting of the 14 nations that signed the 1962 Geneva Agreements. It rejects consultations by any part of the signatories as "impermissible". Thus, the Chinese in effect announce that they are opposing a Polish proposal (backed by the Soviet Union and approved in principle by Great Britain) for a six-nation preliminary consultation on the turmoil engulfing Laos.

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This plan, proposed by Warsaw through diplomatic notes on 27 May, would have brought together Britain, the USSR, India, Canada, Poland and "leading personalities" representing the three factions in Laos. Communist China, North Vietnam, and the United States would have been excluded. Charging that American policies threaten to wreck the Geneva Agreements, Peking asserts that Laos has been pushed "to the brink of a total split and general civil war." It adds: "Laos is a close neighbor of China. The Chinese Government cannot but be gravely concerned over the present situation in Laos. The Chinese Government must point out that the situation is most dangerous." In addition to US aerial activities over Laos, Peking complains about the presence of the Seventh Fleet off the coast of Indochina. It makes no direct threat of armed intervention, however, but adheres to past policy of making no public military commitment in support of the Pathet Lao or Viet Cong. The Chinese do call on the International Control Commission to facilitate negotiations between the three Laotian factions. *(New York Times, 10 June 1964, pp. 1 and 3.)*

10 June-- Jenmin Jih Pao, the Chinese Communist Party newspaper, warns that any further expansion by the United States of the conflict in Laos would meet a "powerful rebuff". It charges that US air reconnaissance and fighter-plane action against the Pathet Lao constitute "direct military attacks on the Laotian people." Once again, Peking does not specifically commit itself to armed intervention in the area. Rather, the emphasis of the article is on seeking a political solution to the Laotian crisis through an early reconvening of the Geneva Conference. The harsh tone of the statement, however, plus the heavy news coverage given the Laotian events during this and the preceding day would seem to indicate a hardening of the Chinese position. On 11 June, the New York Times reports that US fighter escorts for reconnaissance flights over the Plaine des Jarres apparently had been active during the previous day. *(New York Times, 11 June 1964, pp. 1 and 4.)*

12 June-- Charles de Gaulle calls on all foreign powers to withdraw from Southeast Asia and to leave South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos "alone to find their own destinies." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 141.)*

13-15 June-- Communist China sends notes to Great Britain and the Soviet Union requesting that they convene a conference to include the 14 nations that participated in the 1962 Geneva discussions on Laos. It also charges the United States with the "wanton bombing and strafing" of the Chinese mission in the Pathet Lao headquarters of Khang Khay, resulting in the

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death of one staff member and the injury of five others. This same day, a parallel statement by the Peking Government declares that the "Laotian situation has reached a critical juncture." It adds that the United Kingdom and the USSR, as co-chairmen of the Geneva Conference, must act without delay or share responsibility for any further trouble in Laos. The statement asserts that if the United States "should continue to be tolerated in going it alone and acting unscrupulously in defiance of the Geneva Agreements, not only will it be impossible to restore peace in Laos, but there is a danger that...the war in Indo-China may spread." On 15 June, People's Daily warns that the "peace in Indochina and Southeast Asia is hanging by a thread" because of US air attacks in Laos. This editorial comes closer than any previous statement to indicating that Peking might directly become involved in that conflict. After describing the alleged US attack on Khang Khay, it asks rhetorically of the Johnson Administration: "What are you planning to do? Do you intend to force the Chinese people to react to your provocations?" According to the New York Times, political analysts in Hong Kong report that the raid on Khang Khay was carried out by T-28 trainer aircraft converted to fighter-bombers that were supplied to the right-wing Laotian Air Force by the United States. Moreover, "reliable sources in Washington" report that US Air Force jets bombed Communist gun positions the previous week after two Navy planes had been shot down. There are no reports, however, that US planes were involved in the bombing of Khang Khay. The Times reports that it is the consensus of Hong Kong analysts that Peking wishes to avoid direct involvement in the Laotian conflict but that it has virtually committed itself to some kind of action if US flights and Laotian Air Force bombings of the Pathet Lao continue. *(New York Times, 14 and 16 June 1964, pp. 1 and 8, 1 and 3 respectively.)*

24 June-- Clearly worried that the United States has not been deterred by previous warnings, Chen Yi states: "The situation in Indochina has become increasingly grave in the past few days. In disregard of the serious protests of the Laotian and Chinese people, the United States is continuing its wanton bombing in Laos and stepping up its preparations for new military adventures in southern Vietnam. It openly vaunted that it would extend the war in Indochina and completely tear up the two sets of Geneva agreements...It must be pointed out that Indochina is situated by China and not by the United States. China is a signatory to the two sets of Geneva agreements. Nobody should have any misunderstandings. The Chinese people absolutely will not sit idly by

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while the Geneva agreements are completely torn up and the flames of war spread to their side [i.e., apparently, to their border]. We have advocated the convening of the Geneva Conference to seek first of all a peaceful settlement of the Laotian question. However, should any people mistake this for a sign of weakness and think they can do whatever they please in Indochina, they would repent too late." This same day, the New York Times reports that Hong Kong China watchers believe that Peking has decided to lessen the risks of war with the US. These observers point to the relatively moderate tones (compared to other recent statements) of Chen Yi's speech as well as to the fact that Peking has begun to reduce its news coverage of events in Laos. In the past, the extent and tone of its press reports have been fairly reliable mirrors of China's intentions. *(Harold C. Hinton, Communist China in World Politics (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966), p. 354; New York Times, 25 June 1964, pp. 1 and 3.)*

26 June-- Peking radio announces that the Presidium of the Central Committee of the NLF met on 8 and 9 June to consider the actions of the United Nations in sending a three-man observer team to the Cambodia-South Vietnam frontier. It reports that the Front "declared that the South Vietnam Liberation Front does not recognize the so-called United Nations inspection mission sent to border areas...Consequently no guarantee for the safety of the mission would be given when it enters liberation areas in South Vietnam with troops of the United States and its lackeys." The NLF denounces the Americans for using the UN "to intensify and expand the aggressive war in South Vietnam." *(New York Times, 26 June 1964, pp. 1 and 6.)*

July-- Douglas Pike in his book Viet Cong, published in 1966, writes that "[s]ome of the original NLF leadership, such as the Cao Dai element, genuinely favored a true coalition government in which power would be shared; these people saw as their enemy a limited group of Saigonese, whose elimination, along with the launching of certain social and political reforms, would have satisfied them. These elements in the leadership have since been themselves eliminated. Among the true believers, however, and especially among the regulars who controlled the NLF entirely after mid-1964, a coalition was only a transitory arrangement that must give way to full Communist control. Even as a tactic it was considered dubious after mid-1964, probably because the leadership did not feel it was necessary. Hoc Tap [the Lao Dong monthly theoretical journal] in July 1964 contained a significant statement on the matter of negotiation. It declared:

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'The aim of the Revolution and liberation of our compatriots is to defeat the aggression and frustrate the warmongering policies of the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys. To that end, it is necessary to smash the reactionary administrative machinery and the imperialists' mercenary army. This Revolution can and should be settled only by the use of revolutionary acts and the force of the masses to defeat the enemy force. It absolutely cannot be settled by treaties and accords...Laws and accords consistent with the basic interests of the people and country can be achieved only through a long and acute struggle of the people against the enemy. It is illusory to hope to persuade the cruel enemy of the people to comply with accords. The contradictions between the people in South Vietnam and the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys are antagonistic. The correct solution is not to reconcile the contradictions and the classes but through revolution to eliminate the contradictions. It is impossible...to count on 'talks' and 'negotiations' with [the imperialists] as advocated by the modern revisionists...The liberation of South Vietnam can be settled only by force.'

Obviously this was an anti-Soviet statement, but it indicated the dim prospects for any sort of negotiated settlement with the NLF, including negotiation of a coalition government." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 360.)*

July-- Terror and assassination have always been important tools for the VC in their campaign to break down the authority of the Saigon Government. Wilfred Burchett quotes a Viet Cong official regarding a typical assassination campaign: "In each village...We compiled a detailed dossier of the various local despots. If someone merited the death penalty we sent a group to deal with him. Afterwards we used loudhailers to explain the crimes committed...we posted names of other tyrants who would be dealt with if they did not cease their activities ...The executions...and the warnings...played a major role in breaking the grip of the enemy throughout the country...and created conditions under which we could move back into the villages, either permanently or in organizational visits..." *(Roger Swearingen and Hammond Rolph, Communism in Vietnam (Chicago: American Bar Association, 1967), p. 120.)*

July-- Ho Chi Minh in the Lao Dong Party journal Hoc Tap contends that "the revolutionary struggle in our country presents a miniature picture of the revolutionary struggle throughout the world. The two great revolutionary tides in our age, which are the socialist revolution and the revolution for national liberation, are also the two great tides of the

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Vietnamese Revolution. The revolutionary struggle constitutes a profound manifestation of revolutionary relationships...and the contradictions among the reactionary influences." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 326.)*

3 July-- In a speech before the National Assembly, Ho Chi Minh refers to the US need to "save face" in South Vietnam. He says: "They must strictly implement the Geneva Agreements, withdraw all American troops and weapons from South Vietnam and let the South Vietnamese people settle their own affairs by themselves. This is a 'fair' settlement which will save face-losing for the United States." *(Ho Chi Minh, "Speech in the National Assembly, Closing Meeting, First Session, Third Legislature", Against U.S. Aggression, For National Salvation (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1967), pp. 58-60.)*

5 July-- The Soviet Communist Party newspaper Pravda comments on the appointment of General Maxwell Taylor as Ambassador to South Vietnam: "Possibly, the chief requirement of the U.S. Ambassador in Saigon at this time is unrestrained pig-headedness in implementing an American policy in South Vietnam that has been rejected by life. But is the American policy going to become any more promising as a result? No, there are no 'prophets' who can save it. The trouble is that life does not obey the 'laws' they proclaim. *(Ye. Primakov, "Our Commentary: New 'Prophet' for South Vietnam", trans. DES, Pravda, 5 July 1964, p. 4.)*

July-- Gradually, the optimism in Hanoi that had been raised largely by Diem's ouster began to fade. (See entry for 4 February) Serious doubt appeared among the leadership ranks of the Lao Dong. DRV publications during July contain a rash of arguments designed to prove that the NLF is winning and without question will win. Angry diatribes are directed against unnamed doubters. The monthly Hoc Tap warns: "Anyone who shows indifference to or does not support the just struggle of our compatriots in South Vietnam will commit no small crime." On 5 July, the DRV National Assembly defines its policy:

"1. The U.S. government as well as the governments of the countries that took part in the 1954 Geneva conference on Indochina must live up to their commitments, respect the sovereignty, independence, unity, and territorial integrity of Vietnam, and refrain from interference in its internal affairs.

2. The U.S. government must put an end to its aggressive war in South Vietnam, withdraw all its troops and weapons from there, and let the South Vietnamese people settle by themselves their

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own internal affairs in accordance with the program of the NLF.

3. The peaceful reunification of Vietnam is an internal affair of the Vietnamese people. It will be solved in accordance with the spirit of the political program of the Vietnam Fatherland Front and the NLF."

(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), pp. 326-27.)

6 July-- Chinese Communist Foreign Minister Chen Yi states that any attack against North Vietnam would threaten Chinese security and that "the Chinese people naturally cannot be expected to look on with folded arms" if such an attack were to occur. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 141.)*

7 July et seq.-- In an article in the Washington Star in October 1967 entitled "The Case for Continued Bombing of the North", Former Ambassador Maxwell Taylor describes the situation in Saigon in the summer of 1964: "I arrived in Saigon as Ambassador in July, 1964, and inherited the political consequences of the overthrow of the Diem government in the previous November. How historians will eventually praise the significance of this event I do not know, but its immediate result was a period of critical political instability with coup following coup as governments were overturned by the unresisted pressure of power-seeking minority groups. To the Communist leadership in Hanoi and the Viet Cong, the disappearance of their principal enemy, President Diem, was a boon which offered them unexpected opportunities which they were quick to realize. From their point of view, the entire year of 1964 was a period of exploitation of the fall of Diem during which they tried to score dramatic military or political successes, hoping to clinch the victory which they now felt to be within their reach. On our side, we worked feverishly to shore up the government in Saigon and to increase the South Vietnamese forces--military, paramilitary and police--still hoping to be able to cope with the growing guerrilla threat with indigenous resources. We lived dangerously in this period; never sure from night to night when a new coup might overthrow another feeble government or when we might lose some important provincial town to a surprise attack or a military base to mortar fire." *(Washington Star, 22 October 1967.)*

8 July-- In 1964, the Soviet Union began to move to increase its influence in Vietnam, although primarily with respect to the DRV. Khrushchev, at a reception in honor of graduates of the Soviet military academy, states: "For many years now the

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United States has carried on a bloody aggressive war in South Vietnam. Playing the role of an international gendarme, it is scheming to suppress the South Vietnamese people's national liberation movement...The South Vietnamese people have the perfect right to take up arms to struggle for their liberation and interests. They are waging a sacred struggle for freedom and independence, and we support them in this struggle." The Soviet Premier goes on to make the distinction between "aggressive, predatory wars" and "wars of national liberation against colonizers and imperialists." The Soviet Union, he says, opposes the former but regards the latter as "just and sacred." His statement is subsequently broadcast by both Radio Hanoi and Radio Liberation. *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 342; New York Times, 9 July 1964, p. 3.)*

8 July-- In answer to a 6 June letter from DRV Foreign Minister Xuan Thuy, Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi states that "China is the brotherly neighbor of the DRV, as closely related to it as the lips to the teeth. Any aggression against the DRV cannot expect [to find] the Chinese people sitting idly by doing nothing." This typical refrain, characteristic of Chinese expressions of years past, is coupled with an insistence that "the Geneva Agreements...must be observed...," and China's "hope" that "all nations and people who are concerned about the peace of Indochina, and especially the two chairmen of the Geneva meeting and the participating nations, immediately adopt effective measures to stop American aggression and intervention in order to preserve this area's peace and security." *(Jenmin Jih Pao (People's Daily), 8 July 1964.)*

8 July-- UN Secretary-General U Thant urges that the 1954 Geneva Conference reconvene to negotiate an end to the war in Vietnam. He says that "military methods will not bring about peace in South Viet Nam" and that the "only sensible alternative is the political and diplomatic method of negotiation." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 142.)*

14 July-- Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi warns that there is a danger that the wars in Laos and South Vietnam might spread to the whole of Indochina "and even to the whole of Southeast Asia." He notes that the United States has "disapproved" of French and Chinese proposals to reconvene the Geneva Conference on Laos and states: "The 14-nation conference will have to be held sooner or later, and an early convocation is better than a belated one." *(New York Times, 15 July 1964, p. 3.)*

mid-July-- Huynh Tan Phat, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the National Liberation Front, reports in an interview that the situation in Vietnam is "becoming worse every day...The

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ruling circles of the U.S.A. are trying to enlist their military-bloc allies in carrying out their aggressive plans in South Vietnam. The scale of the military intervention is increasing. Things went so far that the interventionists and their henchmen openly announced their intention to carry the war onto the territory of the D.R.V. We have information that the aggressors have already charted specific measures along this line." Phat repeats the NLF conditions for peace: The US must carry out the Geneva Agreements, stop its intervention, withdraw its troops and let the South Vietnamese people solve their own problems. *("South Vietnamese Patriots Shall Not Be Broken!", trans. DES, Pravda, 22 July 1964, p. 5.)*

18 July-- The widening of the war in Vietnam through the increased involvement of the United States moved Communist China to reevaluate Vietnam's meaning to them. Prior to the Tonkin Gulf incidents, the Viet Cong revolution was only one in a number of worldwide national liberation efforts. Kuo Mo-jo states: "The struggle and victories of the South Vietnamese people have firmly established a glorious example for all the world's oppressed nations and oppressed peoples, has provided valuable experience, and has yielded firm support. The struggle and victories of the South Vietnamese people also are the struggle and victories of all oppressed nations and oppressed peoples." Tonkin, however, would soon link the war in the South directly to China's security. (See, e.g., the entry for 29 March 1965) In his speech, Kuo also implicitly castigates the Soviets for shirking their responsibility in Vietnam: "The Chinese people...unswervingly regard actively assisting the Vietnamese people's heroic struggle as an international responsibility which they should carry out to the fullest. We hold that what attitude should after all be adopted in the face of American imperialist aggression, provocations, and threats is, with regard to socialist Vietnam and the revolutionary struggle of the south Vietnamese people, the touchstone differentiating true from false friend, true revolution from false revolution, and true peace from false peace." *(Jenmin Jih Pao (People's Daily), 19 July 1964.)*

19 July-- In a letter to DRV Foreign Minister Xuan Thuy, Chen Yi writes that "the Vietnam problem must be solved by the Vietnamese people themselves on the basis of the Geneva Agreements." While Peking's position on the war continues to reflect a hard line, it is still one of considerable flexibility when compared to post-Tonkin statements. *(Jenmin Jih Pao, 20 July 1964.)*

23 July-- President de Gaulle states at a Paris press conference that a military solution in Vietnam does not seem possible

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and that it is necessary to make peace. He proposes a return to the 1954 Geneva Accords. He suggests that the 1954 Geneva Conference nations reconvene and that the United States, the Soviet Union, France, and Communist China all withdraw from Indochina and promise to guarantee that area's neutrality and independence. He calls for a massive economic and technical aid program to Indochina by those nations that can afford to participate, so that development will replace conflict. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 142.)*

26 July-- Le Monde quotes NLF Chairmen Nguyen Huu Tho as stating that the Front "is not opposed to the convening of an international conference in order to facilitate the search for a solution" to the war in Vietnam. *(Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs, Mission to Hanoi (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), p. 256.)*

26 July-- North Vietnam reiterates its view that the situation in Laos is "extremely dangerous" and calls for the immediate reconvening of the 14-nation Geneva Conference. Western reports that DRV troops are in Laos are termed "allegations and merely brazen slanders." *(New York Times, 27 July 1964, p. 5.)*

26 July-- The Soviets, in a communication to the British Government, charge that the United States has violated the Geneva Accords of 1962 by leaving military personnel in Laos and continuing to give unilateral military assistance to the reactionary forces of that country. They also claim that US aircraft are conducting reconnaissance flights above Laotian territory and are bombing the areas controlled by the Pathet Lao. Moscow therefore proposes to convene the 14 nations that signed the Geneva Accords to discuss urgent measures which would insure a peaceful settlement in Laos. It is suggested that the conference be held in August in Geneva or some other agreeable city. The Soviets warn that they will have to "re-examine" their role as co-chairmen of the Geneva peacekeeping machinery if the United States and other Western powers continue to "block" the convening of a new gathering. *(Jules Davids, ed., Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1964 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations), pp. 228-30; New York Times, 27 July 1964, p. 5.)*

29 July-- In his testimony in support of the foreign aid program before the Senate Appropriations Committee, Secretary of State Rusk discusses the situation in Laos and the North Vietnamese infiltration into South Vietnam, much of it through Laos. He says that since the Pathet Lao have initiated new attacks, the

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United States, is providing material aid to the forces loyal to the Laotian Government and has initiated reconnaissance flights--there being no other way to obtain intelligence about Communist military moves and activities. He adds: "Our purpose is not to escalate the fighting in Laos. However, we want to make it clear to the Communists that we are able and determined to take the necessary steps to assist those who are willing to defend their independence." He regrets that the Soviet Union has not taken strong action to give effect to the 1962 Accords on Laos and that "presently the Soviets are trying to find a way to...withdraw from" their responsibilities. "They are, in effect, saying at the moment that we must go immediately to a 14-nation conference or the Soviet Union will simply have to declare that it cannot bear its responsibility as co-chairman any longer... If we could get real compliance with the Accords of 1962 in Laos this would alleviate the situation in Vietnam materially." Rusk states that there are about 28,000 to 34,000 hard-core Viet Cong in South Vietnam and perhaps 60,000 to 80,000 part-time assistants in the countryside. He maintains that Hanoi controls the operations and provides political and military directions. In 1963, some supplies, medicines, sophisticated weapons, such as modern machineguns, 75mm recoilless rifles, have come South. Several weeks ago, ARVN forces ambushed a group of infiltrators near the Laotian frontier. He says that some of the Viet Cong are southerners and that they get most of their resources in the South. But he adds: "Nevertheless, the reason I think this question of the aggression of the north is so important is that I am completely convinced that if this umbilical cord could be cut on the political personnel and supply levels, that the civil war aspects of this matter could be wound up relatively quickly." It would, however, require "enormous forces" to guard the long frontiers of South Vietnam, and this is impractical. Rusk believes that it would be more realistic for the United States to induce the North Vietnamese to stop infiltration through political means. He says: "I think the object has to be to bring about the political decision to stop it. Now we are in a period where we are trying to induce that political decision by demonstration that whatever they do they are not going to succeed in taking Southeast Asia and that this thing can get much worse if that is their intent. When we look ahead a bit here, we can't predict with assurance on what will happen. We might have to take other measures." *(88th Cong 2d Sess, Foreign Assistance and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1965, Hearings before the Committee on Appropriations, U.S. Senate (Washington: GPO, 1964), pp. 493-519.)*

30 July-- A US State Department response to the Soviet charges of 26 July shares Moscow's concern for the situation in Laos but rejects the charges. This release declares that the Pathet Lao

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and North Vietnamese, backed by the Chinese Communists, have refused to comply with the 1962 Geneva Agreements. The United States had withdrawn all 666 of its military advisory personnel from Laos under the supervision of the ICC. In the face of aggressive attacks launched by Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese forces in May, the Americans have responded to Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma's request for assistance by initiating reconnaissance flights. In regard to the Soviet proposal to reconvene the Geneva Conference, the United States notes that Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma is willing to attend such a gathering provided that a cease-fire is effected under ICC supervision and the Pathet Lao withdraw from those areas which they have illegally occupied by virtue of their May attacks. The United States supports this position. *(Jules Davids, ed., Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1964 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations), pp. 230-32.)*

31 July-- North Vietnamese radar and naval installations at Hon Mat and Hon Ngu islands are shelled by South Vietnamese naval vessels. On the floor of the US Senate during the debate on the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, Senator Wayne Morse, speaking on the basis of information given in executive session by Secretaries Rusk and McNamara to a joint session of the Senate Foreign Relations and Armed Services Committees, reveals that US warships were on patrol in Tonkin Bay nearby when the attacks on the North Vietnamese islands occurred. Morse says that these warships were within three to eleven miles of North Vietnamese territory, although the DRV claims a twelve-mile limit. He declares that the US "knew that the bombing was going to take place." He notes that General Khanh had been demanding escalation of the war to the North and says that with this shelling of the islands it was escalated. Furthermore, Morse states that the attack was made "by South Vietnamese naval vessels—not by junks but by armed vessels of the PT boat type" given to South Viet-Nam as part of American military aid. He adds that this was not just another attempt to infiltrate agents but "a well-thought-out military operation." Finally, the Senator from Oregon charges that the presence of our warships in the proximity "where they could have given protection, if it became necessary" was "bound to be looked upon by our enemies as an act of provocation." Asked whether the US warships had been in the area to protect the South Vietnamese vessels shelling the islands, J. W. Fulbright, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, replies: "The ships were not assigned to protect anyone. They were conducting patrol duty. The question was asked specifically of the highest authority, the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State. They stated without equivocation that these ships, the Maddox and the C. Turner Joy, were not on convoy duty. They had no connection whatever with any Vietnamese ships that might have been operating in the same

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general area." *(Marcus G. Raskin and Bernard B. Fall, The Viet-Nam Reader (New York: Random House, 1965), pp. 310-11.)*

31 July-- The New York Times reports that British Foreign Secretary R. A. Butler, on a five-day visit to Moscow, has been unsuccessful in his attempts to dissuade the Soviet Union from its insistence on an immediate, unconditional 14-nation gathering on Laos. The USSR is reported to have turned down a compromise measure that the two countries act to help the Laotian factions overcome their disagreements by holding a private meeting of neutralist, Pathet Lao and rightist representatives in Switzerland. *(New York Times, 1 August 1964, p. 4.)*

1 August-- The Viennese newspaper Der Kurier publishes two interviews recently given in Shanghai to one of its editors, Dr. Hugo Portisch, one by Chen Yi and the other by an unnamed high official, probably Chou En-lai. The interview with Chen Yi adds nothing of importance to previous Chinese statements on Indochina and other subjects. The other interview, however, is an interesting and important one. Its main theme is a denial of any aggressive intent on the part of the CPR toward the rest of Asia, on both political and military grounds. The military grounds stated are the inadequacy of Chinese military power for offensive combat against a first class enemy, not the fear of retaliation against the mainland of China. In fact, it is explicitly affirmed that a nuclear attack on the CPR could not bring victory to the United States. As for Indochina, the CPR's objective is defined as one of "peace and neutrality", which is described as the only situation that would be acceptable to both the United States and the CPR and is defined as consisting essentially of the withdrawal of "all foreign troops". Following this withdrawal, North and South Vietnam and the three factions in Laos should settle their political future among themselves "without being influenced from without." Nothing is said about a "peace zone" linking Vietnam, or at least South Vietnam, to Laos and Cambodia. The DRV is referred to simply as North Vietnam, and nothing is said about its membership in the "socialist camp" or about any Chinese obligation to defend it for its own sake. The conditions under which the CPR might intervene in Indochina are clearly and solely defined in terms of Chinese national interest: "We would feel threatened only if, perhaps, the United States would send up their "special warfare" [forces] toward the north, if they attacked North Vietnam... This would directly endanger the stability of our border and of the neighboring provinces. In such a case we would intervene... Our army is...mobile and can be committed to action any time along our borders...this will not be a second Korea... A very wide and a very broad front can be set up there [i.e. in Southeast Asia]. Such a war would not remain isolated in a narrow space. It would

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also involve Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, and perhaps also Thailand...In this area the Americans can achieve nothing with even the most up-to-date weapons." *(Harold C. Hinton, Communist China in World Politics (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966), pp. 363-64.)*

2 August-- In a note to Moscow, Communist China informs the Soviets that it does not want them to withdraw as co-chairman of the 1962 Geneva Conference. The message states that it is "necessary that the Soviet Government should use its capacity and influence as co-chairman of the Geneva conference to persuade the United States to give up its unreasonable conditions and accept a proposal for the convening of a 14-nation conference." (The US and Great Britain have insisted that any meeting should be preceded by an effective cease-fire, by the recognition of Souvanna Phouma as Premier, and by the withdrawal of Pathet Lao forces to the positions that they held in May before they renewed their offensive.) Peking says that any Soviet decision on the co-chairmanship should await discussion at a new conference. A parting jab is left for Moscow—Peking expresses the hope that the Soviet Government would "truly shoulder its responsibilities as co-chairman" and with the Communist bloc "and other peace loving countries make continued efforts to stop United States... aggression and intervention in...Indochina..." *(New York Times, 3 August 1964, pp. 1 and 5.)*

2 August-- According to the US Government, the U.S.S. MADDOX, while patrolling international waters in the Gulf of Tonkin and while not closer than 28 miles from the coast of North Vietnam, is attacked by three North Vietnamese torpedo boats. At least three torpedoes are directed at the MADDOX, as well as machinegun fire. The MADDOX avoids all torpedoes, and together with aircraft support from the U.S.S. TICONDEROGA, repels the attack and sinks or damages the attacking craft. These actions take place during daylight hours, and the attacking torpedo boats are photographed. Secretary of Defense McNamara later testifies that: "Since no rational motive for the attack was apparent, we believed it possible that it had resulted from a miscalculation or an impulsive act of a local commander." *(90th Cong 2d Sess, The Gulf of Tonkin, The 1964 Incidents, Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate...on February 20, 1968 (Washington: GPO, 1968), pp. 9-10.)*

3 August-- The International Control Commission reports that "[y]esterday the [North] Vietnamese protested what they called an attack by the United States and South Vietnamese warships on North Vietnamese islands last Thursday." *(Harry S. Ashmore and*

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William C. Baggs, Mission to Hanoi (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), pp. 265-66.)

4 August-- DRV torpedo boats are reported to have directed a second attack on the MADDOX and another destroyer, the C. TURNER JOY, this time 65 miles from the North Vietnamese shore. Two DRV boats are reported sunk, with no American losses. *(Theodore Draper, Abuse of Power (New York: Viking Press, 1967), p. 64.)*

5 August-- In response to reported North Vietnamese attacks on the MADDOX and the C. TURNER JOY, US Seventh Fleet carrier-based aircraft fly 64 sorties against 6 targets in North Vietnam, the targets being PT boat bases and associated facilities. There are 59 attack aircraft in the first wave and 21 in a second wave recycle. *(90th Cong 2d Sess, The Gulf of Tonkin, The 1964 Incidents, Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate...on February 20, 1968 (Washington: GPO, 1968), p. 73.)*

6 August-- In the immediate aftermath of Tonkin, the increased belligerence of Peking's pronouncements remains at odds with both China's actual and its verbal commitments to its Vietnamese allies. The front pages of the 6 August Jenmin Jih Pao are filled with declarations on the new situation in Vietnam. Most important among them is a Chinese Government statement on the war, carried under the headline, "American Aggression Against the DRV is Aggression Against China". By its raids, the US is said to have "crossed 'the brink of war' and taken the first step in expanding the Indochina war." A close reading of the statement, however, reveals that the Chinese are not saying that the raids constituted "aggression" such as would be "aggression against China." By its use of the phrase ch'in-fan (an illegal penetration or encroachment limited in time, degree, and aims) instead of ch'in-lüeh (a serious encroachment amounting to an invasion), the Chinese are in effect telling the US that it has encroached upon the DRV's territory, encumbered a "debt of blood...to the Vietnamese people," and aroused the Chinese people, but has not yet compelled the Chinese Government into unavoidable retaliatory action. That this was in fact the distinction that Peking chose to make is apparent from the same day's Jenmin Jih Pao editorial, which defines "aggression" thusly: "Whenever U.S. imperialism invades [ch'in-fan] the territory, territorial waters, and airspace of the DRV, the Chinese people, without hesitation, will resolutely support the just war of the Vietnamese people resisting the American aggressors [ch'in-lüeh-che]. The Chinese government has repeatedly seriously warned the U.S. government that if it dares to launch an attack against the DRV, the Chinese people will definitely not sit idly by with folded

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arms or sit by without helping. The U.S. government must immediately cease its armed aggressive actions against the DRV; otherwise, the U.S. government must bear all the serious consequences arising from this and what may follow. Don't say that we haven't forewarned you." *(Jenmin Jih Pao, 6 August 1964.)*

6 August-- Pravda reports that "[a]uthoritative Soviet circles resolutely condemn the aggressive actions of the U.S.A. in the Gulf of Tonkin..." Compared to the Chinese Government's statement, Moscow's comments are quite mild, not even bothering to deny the American contention that the DRV torpedo boats attacked the MADDOX. Instead, the Soviets are content to state that: "The wholly unwarranted presence here of naval and air forces, and more expecially the 'patrolling' of foreign shores, on its own merits cannot be appraised as other than an overt hostile act toward the states of this region...[i]t is becoming clear that the presence of U.S. naval forces in the Gulf of Tonkin has created a situation fraught with dangerous complications there." The following day, Pravda publishes a greatly watered-down report on the Peking Government statement of 6 August. *("Aggressive Acts of USA in Gulf of Tonkin", trans. DES, Pravda, 6 August 1964, p. 1; "CPR Government Statement", trans. DES, Pravda, 7 August 1964, p. 3.)*

6 August-- Secretaries Rusk and McNamara testify before the Senate Committees on Foreign Relations and Armed Services. Secretary Rusk says that he does not believe that the Chinese Communists had any direct participation in the Tonkin Gulf attacks: "The immediate action that was here does seem to be exclusively North Vietnamese, but the Chinese Communists have been giving strong public support to the position of North Vietnam, and they recently made a statement on the 6th of August: 'Aggression by the United States against North Vietnam means aggression against China. The U.S. Government must stop its armed provocations against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Otherwise it must be held responsible for all the grave consequences arising therefrom.' It is our impression that the Chinese would give at least very strong political and public support to the North Vietnamese in this situation. We just frankly do not know whether they will translate that into action of any sort." In further response to this question of Chinese activities, Secretary McNamara states that Chinese Communist aircraft operating out of Hainan Island were aloft at the time of the North Vietnamese attacks but that they did not approach US vessels or aircraft and did not in any way attack. *(88th Cong 2d Sess, Southeast Asia Resolution, Joint Hearing before the Committee on Foreign*

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Relations and the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate (Washington: GPO, 1966), pp. 5-12.)

7-9 August-- On 7 August, the UN Security Council extends an invitation to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam to testify on the armed clashes in the Gulf of Tonkin. Two days later, North Vietnam rejects this invitation, declaring that the Security Council "has no right to examine U.S. war acts" in Vietnam. On this same day, the Chinese Communists assert that "aggression by United States imperialism against the Vietnamese people means aggression against the Chinese people." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 145.)*

9 August-- A somewhat more threatening Chinese note than that of 6 August is struck, including the hint that "volunteers" might be sent to Vietnam. This statement, however, appears to be primarily for purposes of domestic consumption and is delivered by a second-rank official, Liao Ch'eng-chih: "It is even necessary to take practical action and volunteer our support for the struggle of the Vietnamese people in their struggle against U.S. aggression in defense of their homeland...The DRV is our fraternal neighboring country which is as close to us as our lips and teeth...The Chinese people can never permit themselves to sit with folded arms without lending a helping hand to the fraternal Vietnamese people when they are subjected to U.S. ruthless aggression." *(Harold C. Hinton, Communist China in World Politics (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966), pp. 355-56.)*

10 August-- Public Law 88-408, to be known as the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, is passed by both Houses of Congress. It resolves: "That the Congress approves and supports the determination of the President, as Commander in Chief, to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression. Sec. 2. The United States regards as vital to its national interest and to world peace and security in Southeast Asia. Consonant with the Constitution of the United States and the Charter of the United Nations and in accordance with its obligations under the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, the United States is, therefore, prepared, as the President determines, to take all necessary steps, including the use of armed force, to assist any member or protocol state of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty requesting assistance in defense of its freedom. Sec. 3. This resolution shall expire when the President shall determine that the peace and security of the area is reasonably assured by international conditions created by action of the United Nations or otherwise, except that it may be terminated earlier by concurrent resolution of the Congress."

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(Jules Davids, ed., Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1964 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations), pp. 216-17.)

10 August-- The US Defense Department confirms reports that Communist China has been moving Russian-built MIG 15s and MIG 17s into North Vietnam. The spokesman says: "This has been expected for some time because of known preparations such as lengthening of runways of airfields in the Hanoi area." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 145.)*

late 1964-early 1965-- On 4 December 1966, U Thant is reported as saying in a Newsweek interview that the United States has thwarted his attempts to bring about peace talks three times between late 1964 and early 1965. He says that American officials remained silent about the first probe, rejected the second because they thought Hanoi was insincere, and turned down the third on the ground that such talks would weaken the South Vietnamese Government. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), pp. 207-08.)*

late 1964-- An article published in the 30 November 1965 issue of Look magazine states that the North Vietnamese had offered to negotiate with the United States in the fall of 1964 and that the offer had been relayed by U Thant to Ambassador Stevenson. On 15 November 1965 (the day of the magazine's public release), a State Department spokesman confirms the report that the United States in late 1964 rejected an offer by the DRV to meet American emissaries in Rangoon to discuss ending the Vietnamese war. The spokesman says that the offer was not pursued since, "on the basis of the total evidence available to us, we did not believe at any time that North Viet Nam was prepared for serious talks." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), pp. 166-67.)*

4 September-- Pathet Lao Prince Souphanouvong calls on President De Gaulle and urges him to take a hand in the Laotian dispute. Afterwards, Souphanouvong states that the only solution for the "explosive" crisis in Laos is the immediate convocation of a new Geneva gathering. *(New York Times, 5 September 1964, p. 3.)*

4 September-- Soviet Premier Khrushchev accuses Communist China of trying to disorganize the international Communist and working class movement and of giving "by no means negligible assistance to international imperialism." He charges that United States'

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"aggressive actions" against North Vietnam and "interference in the internal affairs of Laos" shows that the West is profiting from Communist disunity. *(New York Times, 5 September 1964, pp. 1 and 2.)*

4 September-- Radio Hanoi hints at the possibility that Chinese "volunteers" may be sent to Vietnam. It states: "The DRV foreign ministries [embassies] abroad have received tens of thousands of telegrams and letters voicing support for the South Vietnamese people's struggle...The letter from the workers at the Peking Metal and Electromechanical Plant states that 'all of us are ready to respond to the call of the Fatherland and will not hesitate when necessary to go to the front line, in Vietnam or anywhere else.'" Hanoi claims that it has received offers for volunteers from youths in China, East Germany, and Hungary. *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 338.)*

15 September-- Pravda discusses the "persistent talk recently in responsible American circles and in certain U.S. press organs to the effect that the Democratic Republic of Vietnam somehow 'has no right' to establish the breadth of its territorial waters at 12 miles, or, at any rate, the United States 'need not concern itself with this.'" The Soviets contend that each country has the right to set its own territorial limits in accordance with its "historical, economic, political and military-strategic conditions of existence..." They point out that this is common and accepted practice. Thus, US refusal to reckon with the established breadth of the territorial waters of other countries constitutes "an open infringement of the sovereignty and security of these countries, in particular...of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam." Pravda accuses the Americans of seeking a pretext for expanding the war in South Vietnam. It quotes Khrushchev as stating that "should the imperialists thrust a war upon the socialist countries, the peoples of the Soviet Union will carry out their sacred duty, they will be able to stand up for their motherland and for the other socialist countries." *("Clumsy Attempts", trans. DES, Pravda, 15 September 1964, p. 3.)*

18-22 September-- The Soviet news agency Tass reports that a new military incident took place in the Gulf of Tonkin on 18 September. Two American destroyers in international waters opened fire at five unknown ships on the assumption that those crafts, in the words of Secretary McNamara, "had hostile intentions." Tass states that three of the attacked ships (presumably North Vietnamese) have been reported sunk. It reports that "authoritative" Soviet circles "decisively condemn" the action as another example, comparable to the 2 August incident, of the United States attempting to find a pretext for taking

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new "aggressive" measures against the DRV. The US, it is said, bears "full responsibility for the possible consequences of such incidents...The events of Sept. 18 confirm again that the presence of ships of the American Seventh Fleet in the Gulf of Tonkin is a continuous cause of tension and a source of incidents and armed conflicts that jeopardize the cause of peace." *("Stop US Provocation in Gulf of Tonkin", trans. DES, Izvestia, 22 September 1964, p. 1.)*

19 September-- Referring to the 5 August air attacks on the DRV, Radio Liberation broadcasts an NLF army high command "communique", which declares: "We the NLFSV Army High Command ...are extremely indignant and we severely warn the U.S. aggressors that in the future if they dare bomb and strafe or provoke North Vietnam recklessly, all the NLF armed forces will close with the North Vietnamese people, double the fighting tempo, increase the vigor of attacks, and annihilate more U.S. aggressors and their hirelings on all battlefields..." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 370.)*

21 September-- That the Tonkin Gulf incidents and the American retaliation that ensued had the effect of uniting, at least temporarily, the NLF and the DRV is illustrated by the following Radio Liberation broadcast: "The NLFSV Central Committee states that it energetically condemns and denounces before world public opinion these extremely dangerous plans of the U.S. imperialists to broaden the war...If the U.S. imperialists and their hirelings foolishly and recklessly embark on a dangerous military adventure...the South Vietnamese people, as one, with their Liberation troops, armed forces, and paramilitary forces will cooperate closely with their 18 million compatriots in North Vietnam and the brother Vietnam People's Army in resolutely resisting to the end in order to annihilate the U.S. imperialists...and to protect the North. This is our unshakable iron will..." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 370.)*

26 September-5 October-- On a visit to Peking, Cambodian Chief of State Sihanouk is reassured of Chinese Communist support. A joint statement issued on 5 October pledges the "Chinese people" to give "all out support" to Cambodia in case of "foreign armed aggression." While in Peking, Sihanouk thanks China for "new and most important unconditional economic and military aid" and says that China is Cambodia's "number one friend." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 146.)*

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5 October-- The New York Times reports on 8 October that Peking appears to have dropped its proposal for an international conference to end the war in South Vietnam. Hong Kong analysts attribute this to the recent deterioration of the political situation in that country. In such conditions, it is suggested, Peking may have felt that the Viet Cong had a better chance to gain power through the collapse of the Saigon regime than through an international conference. The most significant indication of this possible policy change appeared in the joint Chinese-Cambodian communique of 5 October, which calls for international conferences to deal with the problems of Laos and Cambodia but insists that the "question of South Vietnam should be solved without foreign interference by the South Vietnamese people themselves." As a first step, the communique demands that US military forces be withdrawn to "facilitate the peaceful reunification of Vietnam." This stand coincides with that of the NLF. *(New York Times, 8 October 1964, p. 10.)*

8 October-- Upon returning to Phnom Penh from his state visit to Peking, Norodom Sihanouk reports that Peking has promised Cambodia "substantial" new military and other aid. He also says that he has reached agreement with North Vietnam and the NLF on the question of Cambodian-Vietnam border raids. *(New York Times, 9 October 1964, p. 6.)*

October-- The CPR journal China Reconstructs refers to the incidents in the Tonkin Gulf and the American response: "The U.S. attack on the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam was wholly premeditated. As an excuse for spreading the flames of war, the U.S. government claimed that on August 4 a "second attack" had been made on U.S. warships in Tonkin Gulf by D.R.V. torpedo boats. This alleged attack is supposed to have taken place two days after the D.R.V. patrol boats were forced to take action in self-defence and drive a U.S. warship out of D.R.V. territorial waters where it had provocatively intruded ...This alleged "second attack" never occurred. The story about it is a barefaced lie." *("China Support for Viet-Nam", China Reconstructs, VIII, no. 10 (October 1964), p. 3.)*

October-- A US State Department "Working Paper on the North Vietnamese Role in the War in South Vietnam", based upon information that is not drawn from sensitive sources but which is said to be further confirmed by such "sensitive intelligence", reports that in this month the first complete tactical unit of the North Vietnamese Army, the 95th Regiment, leaves North Vietnam for the South. This new unit, its cadres drawn primarily from the 325th Division, reaches South Vietnam in December. The 32d Regiment leaves the North in September or

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October 1964 and arrives in South Vietnam between January and March. A second regiment of the 325th Division, the 101st, leaves North Vietnam by December 1964. All of these dates of departure are prior to the beginning of the US bombing of North Vietnam in February 1965. The paper thus observes: "In short, the evidence does not support the claim, sometimes made, that the sending of regular North Vietnamese units was only in response to the U.S. bombing." It goes on to state that between November 1964 and the end of 1965 a buildup of 33 NVA battalions (about 10 regiments) takes place in the South. Of these, about 3 NVA battalions (2,000 men) had arrived by the end of 1964. By the end of 1965, the NVA comprised about 30% of the total Main Force operating in South Vietnam. The paper draws the following inferences from this evidence: "1. Hanoi probably became dissatisfied with the failure of the Viet Cong, by itself, to capture South Viet-Nam. 2. It therefore decided to provide the increment of strength necessary to ensure seizure and control of the South. NVA regular units were to be the means to this end. 3. The relatively slow pace of the buildup is probably explainable in terms of poor transport and logistics, and the belief that time was on Hanoi's side. 4. Far from triggering the regular North Vietnamese buildup, U.S. actions were in response to it: the bombing of the North and the introduction of U.S. troops all followed not only the earlier movement of men and supplies from the North, but specifically came after regular North Vietnamese units had begun to be sent in quantity." *(Congressional Record, 9 May 1968, pp. H-3604-10.)*

late 1964-early 1965-- Citing DOD statistics provided by Secretary of Defense McNamara, Senator Mike Mansfield, in an address at Yeshiva University on 16 June 1966, observes: "When the sharp increase in the American military effort began in early 1965, it was estimated that only about 400 North Vietnamese soldiers were among the enemy forces in the South which totaled 140,000 at that time." Earlier in 1966, a bipartisan group of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which was headed by Senator Mansfield, issued a report upon returning from a visit to South Vietnam. That report had estimated that North Vietnamese regular soldiers made up only 14,000 of the estimated 230,000-man enemy force in South Vietnam in December 1965. *(Theodore Draper, Abuse of Power (New York: Viking Press, 1967), pp. 77-78.)*

October-- To outsiders, the National Liberation Front portrayed the "liberated areas" as peaceful utopias, where all hostility and animosity had vanished. To residents, however, it was a zone requiring the fulfillment of urgent tasks. Within this vast social construction site, military units had to be formed and

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trained, food production increased, taxes paid, and spies uncovered. An editorial in the NLF clandestine newspaper Red Flag, circulating in the Central Vietnam area, contains an October editorial outlining the "four tasks to be performed in the liberated area":

"1. The masses must be ideologically mobilized by means of education and...[agit-prop] activities. Particular attention must be paid to [land tenure] problems... Unity must be strengthened and enlarged in order for the NLFSV to rally more and more people...We must increase our patriotism and undauntedness...The struggle must be heightened.

2. The NLFSV, the various liberation associations, and the PRP Youth League must be formed or re-formed so as to contribute to the effort to mobilize the masses...Massively join the revolutionary organizations and consolidate them...Strengthen the ranks of the basic patriotic organizations...

3. The combat hamlet system must be developed along with the guerrilla units designed to fight a war of movement. All of us patriots in South Vietnam must realistically take part in the guerrilla war with the most ardent determination to kill the enemies and save the country.

4. Efforts must be made to develop our economic base, as well as the cultural and intellectual life in the liberated area..." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), pp. 273-74.)*

16 October-- The Soviets announce that N. S. Khrushchev has been released from his numerous state and Party duties on account of his advanced age and failing health. In Peking, the Chinese openly applaud the fall of the "arch-schemer", although they express fears that "Khrushchevism without Khrushchev" might continue. It soon becomes clear that Khrushchev's retirement was forced due to deep discontent among his colleagues on a wide range of issues. Replacing him as First Secretary of the Communist Party is Leonid I. Brezhnev, a career Party organization man (apparatchik) and long-time Khrushchev protégé. The new Premier is Alexei N. Kosygin, a specialist in industry and economic management. The principle of "collective leadership" is announced to be the basis on which policy will be made in the future. *(Michel Tatu, Power in the Kremlin (New York: Viking Press, 1969), pp. 364-423.)*

16 October-- In a statement on the Chinese announcement that the CPR has exploded a nuclear device, President Johnson says:

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"The United States reaffirms the defense commitments in Asia. Even if Communist China should eventually develop an effective nuclear capability, that capability would have no effect upon the readiness of the United States to respond to requests from Asian nations for help in dealing with Communist Chinese aggression. The United States will also not be diverted from its efforts to help the nations of Asia to defend themselves and to advance the welfare of their people." *(Public Papers of the Presidents, Lyndon B. Johnson, 1963-1964 (Washington: GPO, 1965), vol 2, p. 1357.)*

19 October-- Tran Van Thanh, acting for the Foreign Relations Commission of the NLF, sends a note to Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi, congratulating China on its successful nuclear test and stating that "China's possession of nuclear weapons can mean only further consolidation of world peace, a new guarantee for nations struggling for self-liberation, and another strong impetus to the world revolutionary movement. The successful nuclear test by China ...will increase the strength of the world's revolutionary forces and encourage the national liberation policies." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 337.)*

27 October-4 November-- The Cambodian Government alleges that US and South Vietnamese planes have strafed and bombed Cambodian villages and requests Communist China's support against "the criminal aggression of the American-South Vietnamese forces of oppression." On 31 October, Peking replies that it "cannot ignore...grave crimes...against the Cambodian people." No specific promises of support, however, are mentioned. On 3 November, the New York Times reports that new Soviet arms aid, including two MIG-17 fighters, has arrived in Phnom Penh. On 4 November, the Soviet Union appeals to the nations which attended the 1954 Geneva Conference to reconvene in order to guarantee the neutrality and territorial integrity of Cambodia. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 148; New York Times, 3 and 5 November 1964, pp. 1 and 12, 1 and 2 respectively.)*

November-- In an address entitled "The Path to Viet-Nam: A Lesson in Involvement" delivered on 15 August 1967, Mr. William P. Bundy, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, discusses the situation in South Vietnam in late 1964:

"But there is a...point whether...it was the United States alone which unilaterally changed the character of the war in

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the direction of a conventional conflict. It is alleged that Hanoi was adhering to a tacit agreement that, so long as we did not bomb North Viet-Nam, Hanoi would not send in its regulars, at least in units.

Multiple and conclusive evidence which became available from the spring of 1965 onward seems to me to refute these contentions. As had been repeatedly made public over the past 2 years, we know that one North Vietnamese regiment entered South Viet-Nam by December 1964, and we know that several other regiments entered in the spring of 1965 on timetables of infiltration that can only have reflected command decisions taken in Hanoi prior to the beginning of the bombing.

From the standpoint of the basis for U.S. decisions, this evidence simply reinforces the February picture that Hanoi was moving for the kill...The point is that Hanoi, as we suspected then and later proved, had taken major steps to raise the level of the war before the bombing began.

As to any tacit agreement, these facts alone seem to disprove that there ever was one...Is it not far more reasonable to conclude that Hanoi preferred to conceal its hand but was prepared at all times to put in whatever was necessary to bring about military victory--and that the regular units were simply a part of that policy, introduced after they had run out of native southerners and wanted to maintain and step up the pressure?" *(Department of State Bulletin, v. 57, pp. 282-83.)*

1 November-- In late 1964, DRV optimism again revives and its settlement line hardens. General Giap indicates in an interview with a Japanese journalist that the price asked of the United States is being raised. He is questioned about a settlement, and, after replying with the standard answer ("withdrawal of U.S. troops, ...material, stop aggression, ...let the South Vietnamese settle their own destiny..."), he adds: "At the same time it [the United States] must also respect the Geneva agreements on Laos and Cambodia and put an end to its policy of intervention and aggression in the Kingdom of Laos and respect the sovereignty, independence, and neutrality of the Kingdom of Cambodia." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, p. 327.)*

25 November-- An Izvestia commentary takes note of reports in the US press that "influential circles" are planning to broaden the war in Vietnam. It notes that, according to the Associated Press, Ambassador to Saigon Maxwell Taylor is scheduled to arrive in Washington next week for a White House conference at which he "will request the organization of air raids on installations in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and on areas in

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Laos held by patriotic forces. Some generals of the Pentagon want to go further still. They propose moving regular American troops into South Vietnam and with their help starting an offensive against the North." The article states that such people "would do well to learn one truism, namely: What is happening in South Vietnam is not an 'externally inspired rebellion' but a popular uprising against the puppet regime and the foreign interventionists. The South Vietnamese partisans are inspired by the idea of the struggle for the freedom and independence of their homeland. And ideas, as we know, cannot be destroyed with bombs and napalm." Finally, the Soviets note in a rather cautious statement that the "neighbor states of South Vietnam now threatened by the Pentagon are not alone, that they have mighty allies in the socialist states." *("Commentator", "The Policy of Bankrupts", trans. DES, Izvestia, 25 November 1964, p. 2.)*

26 November-- Pravda reports that the "hotheads" in Washington are preparing an extension of the war to North Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia under the pretext that the South Vietnamese partisans "allegedly 'receive help from outside.'" The commentary states that an "extension of the war to the north, if it is called 'limited' a thousand times, will be an extension of military aggression to the whole Indochinese peninsula...The Soviet people have always rendered fraternal support to the Vietnamese people in their struggle for national liberation. This position of our country remains firm and unchanged." *(Olga Chechetkina, "Dangerous New Provocation Is Being Prepared", trans. DES, Pravda, 26 November 1964, p. 4.)*

late 1964-early 1965-- Douglas Pike, in his study of the Viet Cong, writes that the "NLF moderates, those who desired reunification but held that it was impossible to achieve, apparently dominated the NLF at least in this period [i.e. mid-1963]. The indigenous Southern elements in the NLF who opposed reunification on any basis of course were not vocal about their fears. After the Cao Dai elements, originally among the chief supporters of the NLF, defected en masse following the end of the Diem regime, some of their members told the GVN that at least the majority of the NLF rank and file opposed reunification since they felt that it would amount to turning South Vietnam into a vassal state of the North...The division grew increasingly apparent in late 1964 and early 1965, when Radio Liberation spoke constantly in terms of 'U.S. withdrawal and the establishment of neutrality' while Radio Hanoi spoke constantly in terms of 'U.S. withdrawal, negotiation, and reunification.'

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In the same sense, Radio Liberation spoke of 'Southerners settling their own problems' and Radio Hanoi of 'all Vietnamese discussing their various problems and settling them.'" *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 369.)*

4 December-- At a Moscow rally for a visiting Czechoslovak delegation, Leonid I. Brezhnev, newly appointed First Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, addresses himself to recent "attacks and shelling" of the DRV by American planes and warships. He states that the Soviet Union "cannot remain indifferent to the fortunes of a fraternal socialist country and is prepared to render it the necessary assistance. (Stormy applause.) Let the imperialists beware of playing with fire! It is a dangerous game!" *("Soviet-Czechoslovak Friendship Rally in Moscow", trans. DES, Pravda, 4 December 1964, pp. 1-3.)*

9 December-- The People's Revolutionary Party, in a broadcast over Radio Liberation, discusses its goals and its relationship with the NLF: "The [enemy] slanders us saying that our Party monopolizes the Front and that our Party's solidarity policy is nothing more than a trick for the present...It says the Party's strategic objectives are against those of the Front, such as national independence, democracy, peace, and neutrality, and they say that our Party cannot pursue a sincere and lasting policy of solidarity with the Front. This argument proves that the enemies of our people do not understand anything about our Party of Marxism-Leninism...The general Marxist-Leninist principles of the working class are aimed at rallying the majority of the forces into a united national front, a worker-peasant alliance led by the working class... Our Party does not conceal its ultimate objective, which is to achieve socialism and communism. But our Party has never ceased pointing out that the path leading to that objective is long, and that the objective cannot be achieved in a few years, but several score years..." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), pp. 380-81.)*

16 December-- A Peking rally is held in support of the revolutionary struggle in Vietnam. The NLF political position ("U.S. imperialism to stop its war of aggression, withdraw all its military personnel, armaments and war material and leave the south Vietnamese people to settle their internal affairs...as put forward in the programme of the National Liberation Front.") is set forth by its representative Nguyen Minh Phuong. He claims: "World public opinion regards the Front as the sole genuine representative of the south Vietnamese people." Liu Ning-I speaks on the recent international conference for solidarity with the Vietnamese people, held in Hanoi. Obviously referring to the

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Soviets, he states that the overwhelming majority of the delegates to the conference "angrily refuted" the revisionists' various "erroneous" arguments and proposals for settling the Viet Nam problem. "Those who, on the one hand, pretended to support the Vietnamese people's struggle and, on the other hand, made every effort to advocate arguments for begging U.S. imperialism for peace and requesting the United Nations, which it controls, to interfere in the problems of Viet Nam and Indo-China were subjected to the exposure and criticism they deserved," Liu Ning-I declares. *("Heroic Struggle Supported", Peking Review, VII, no. 52 (25 December 1964), pp. 10-11.)*

20 December-- Balancing the anti-Soviet overtones of the 16 December Peking rally, NLF Central Committee member Nguyen Van Thien thanks the Soviet Government and people for their support. He states that the "heroic and courageous struggle of the Soviet people in the October Revolution, in the years of foreign intervention and in the Patriotic War is a brilliant example for us." *("Today Is the Fourth Anniversary of the Founding of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam: The People of South Vietnam Will Win—Nguyen Van Thien, Member of the Central Committee of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, Tells of the Successes of the South Vietnamese Patriots and of the Fraternal Ties of Friendship and Solidarity Binding the Peoples of the Soviet Union and the Population of South Vietnam", trans. DES, Pravda, 20 December 1964, p. 5.)*

21 December-- Chinese Communist Premier Chou En-lai denounces the United States for "aggression and intervention in Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia" and for "occupation of South Korea" and states that "if the United States enlarges the war in Indo-China, China will absolutely not sit idly by." He also says that the US has been informed at the Warsaw meetings that any settlement of concrete problems in Sino-American relations is out of the question until the United States withdraws its forces from the Taiwan area. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 150.)*

24 December-- People's Daily publishes an article on the Laotian situation which is believed to have been written by a member of the Politburo of the Chinese Communist Party. This statement warns that all of Indochina would be plunged into war if the US decides to bomb the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos. It calls for the reconvening of a 14-nation conference to insure the implementation of the 1962 Geneva Agreements. Two days earlier, the New York Times had reported that the Laotian Government had agreed privately to allow increased bombing

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strikes by United States aircraft against Communist supply lines in Laos. On 24 December, however, Prince Souvanna Phouma denies this. When questioned about this report, a US Embassy spokesman in Vientiane declines to comment. *(New York Times, 25 December 1964, p. 14.)*

26 December-2 January 1965-- On 26 December, the US Department of Defense announces that the first of seven nuclear-armed submarines is stationed off the coast of China. Three days later, Communist China calls this a "naked provocation by United States imperialism against the Chinese people" and an "utterly shameless act of nuclear blackmail." On 2 January, the Soviets term the US move "a dangerous act aimed at increasing international tension in Southeast Asia." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 150; E. Alexeyev, "Our Commentary: Polaris Missiles Off the Coast of Asia", trans. DES, Pravda, 2 January 1965, p. 3.)*

27 December-- Cambodia announces that Communist China has agreed to provide it more military aid, including heavy artillery. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 150.)*

28 December-- The NLF had long referred to the Diem regime as "rebels", implying that it and not the Saigon authorities was the only legitimate representative of the South Vietnamese people. By late 1964, this claim and its inherent functions came to be more explicitly expressed: "Faced with the Cambodian Royal Government's decision to open negotiations with the NLFSV on the frontier problem...the Saigon puppet authorities on December 8 issued a communiqué aimed at distorting the negotiations and declaring arrogantly that only they themselves have legal sovereignty and competence to settle the Vietnamese-Cambodian frontier problem...From the international viewpoint, the Front has the full prestige and power to represent 14 million South Vietnamese in dealing with foreign affairs for the benefit of the country and people...On the basis of equality and free will, all that is signed, under whatever form, between the NLFSV and the Cambodian government will be valid." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 162.)*

30 December-- In response to a telegram of 18 December from DRV Foreign Minister Xuan Thuy, Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko replies that he shares the DRV's concern for the troubled situation in Indochina. He demands the strict observance of the 1954 and 1962 Geneva Agreements by all states concerned. For its part, the Soviet Government "is doing and will continue to do everything in its power that will contribute to the

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fulfillment of these agreements." Gromyko states the Soviet position as follows:

"The Soviet Union resolutely supports the just national-liberation struggle of the population of South Vietnam ...The Soviet government demands that the U.S.A. stop all interference in the affairs of South Vietnam, withdraw its troops from this country, remove its arms and permit the Vietnamese people to decide their own internal affairs.

The Soviet Union insists that the U.S.A. not interfere in the internal affairs of Laos, completely withdraw its military and paramilitary personnel from Laos, stop its participation in military operations against the Pathet Lao and the peaceful population and abandon its attempts to use Laotian territory for widening the war in South Vietnam and for provocational actions against the D.R.V.

The Soviet government believes that only as a result of suitable arrangements among the three political forces of Laos can a way be found for a solution of the internal problems of this country. The Soviet government is decisively in favor of calling an international conference on Laos, without any prior conditions, to discuss urgent measures to ensure a peaceful settlement in Laos in accordance with the 1962 Geneva agreements."

With regard to the threat of American military action against the DRV, Gromyko offers the rather vague pledge: "True to the principles of proletarian internationalism, the U.S.S.R. will not remain indifferent to the fate of this fraternal socialist country and is prepared to render the necessary assistance to the D.R.V. in case the aggressors dare to infringe upon its independence and sovereignty." *("Stop US Aggression in Vietnam and Laos", trans. DES, Pravda, 5 January 1965, p. 3.)*

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CHAPTER III

1965-31 March 1968

1965

January-- Sir Robert Thompson, former Permanent Secretary in Malaya and Head of the British Advisory Mission in South Vietnam from 1961-1965, describes conditions in Vietnam at the beginning of 1965. He writes: "At this point, after constant changes of government and two abortive coups d'etat, there was every prospect that a government might be formed [in Saigon] containing elements prepared to negotiate a cease-fire, after which an ostensibly neutralist coalition government with the National Liberation Front would have been formed. Having invited the American Military Assistance Command to leave, and given it plenty of time and all facilities to do so, the new government would then have spent the necessary time in establishing full control before proposing reunification with North Vietnam as the final solution." In another passage, Thompson states: "...the Viet Cong had established a position in South Vietnam where they were in control of large areas of the countryside and had sufficiently penetrated the towns to create conditions of instability, which, in turn, were undermining the whole fabric of organized government. To add to this atmosphere of instability, there had been continual changes of government during the preceding few months. The two major threats which developed from this situation were, first, that the armed forces of South Vietnam might be defeated piecemeal and their morale broken, thereby destroying the physical base for continued resistance to the insurgent; and, second, that the government itself might completely collapse, thereby destroying any remaining political base." Sir Robert postulates that in this situation the insurgent, who has been receiving aid in the form of a continual flow of small parties of men and materials, is now in a position to absorb whole regular units and heavier weapons. *(Sir Robert Thompson, Defeating Communist Insurgency, The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam (New York: Praeger, 1966), pp. 43, 166.)*

January-- That the Communists are increasingly confident of an early victory in South Vietnam is demonstrated by the almost unrestrained optimism of their propaganda. The Soviet-dominated international journal World Marxist Review states that "[t]he U.S. imperialists' position in South Vietnam is becoming more and more hopeless. The hour of their final defeat is approaching inexorably. Nothing can save the U.S. aggressor

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any longer..." *(Suharjo, "The Peoples Are Breaking the Fetters of Colonial Oppression", World Marxist Review, VIII, no. 1 (January 1965), p. 38.)*

early 1965-- A People's Revolutionary Party training manual, dated early 1965, states that the PRP is "the vanguard of Southern workers dedicated to achieving a patriotic, democratic, and national revolution in order to introduce socialism and then communism to Vietnam...Once Vietnam is reunited and socialism created, the Party will then lead the people toward the establishment of communism. Communism will be practiced as it is in the Soviet Union." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 142.)*

21 January-- The Soviet Union, in a message sent through the British Ambassador to Moscow, urges the United States to refrain from bombing and strafing Laotian territory. The previous week two US planes had been downed while attacking North Vietnamese supply routes in Laos. *(New York Times, 22 January 1965, p. 3.)*

22 January-- Peking radio announces that a "Patriotic Front" similar to the National Liberation Front in South Vietnam has been set up in Thailand. This announcement follows warnings by Thai Premier Thanom Kittikachorn that Chinese Communist agents are infiltrating Thailand from Laos. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 151.)*

31 January-1 February-- On 31 January, right-wing Laotian Army officers undertake a coup against the Government of Prince Souvanna Phouma. They announce that they want to institute certain changes in the leadership of the Army and that their goals are not political. By the following day, the coup is terminated by the Royal Laotian Army. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 152.)*

5-19 February-- On 5 February, Pravda reports that the Soviets have handed British Ambassador Sir Humphrey Trevelyan a proposed draft message from the co-chairmen of the 1962 Geneva Conference calling for the urgent convocation of a new international meeting on Laos. On 19 February, another draft message is sent to the British condemning American "aggressive acts" in Laos. *(New York Times, 6 and 20 February, pp. 3 and 2 respectively.)*

6-7 February-- On 6 February, Soviet Premier Kosygin arrives in Hanoi. At a dinner in his honor, North Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong urges that Soviet and Chinese leaders forget their differences and join together in the fight against US imperialism. On 7 February, Kosygin tells a mass rally in Hanoi that the USSR

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will supply North Vietnam with all necessary assistance if the aggressors dare to encroach upon its independence and sovereignty. He sternly warns the United States against its schemes to provoke acts of war against the DRV. The published speech gives no indication that the Soviet Premier has, at this time, gone beyond promises and demands that the Kremlin had made previously. Later, the Chinese were to charge that Kosygin had delivered to Hanoi an American message asking Moscow to use its influence to persuade the DRV to halt military aid to the Viet Cong and to get the VC to end attacks on South Vietnamese cities as preconditions for peace talks. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 152; Donald S. Zagoria, Vietnam Triangle (New York: Pegasus, 1967), p. 151.)*

7 February-- The White House issues a statement that American and South Vietnamese air units have been ordered to launch retaliatory attacks against barracks and staging areas in the southern part of North Vietnam which intelligence shows are actively used by Hanoi to train and infiltrate VC personnel into South Vietnam. This move is said to be in response to provocations ordered and directed by the Hanoi regime, specifically surprise attacks against two South Vietnamese airfields, two US barracks areas, several villages, and one town. Intelligence indicates and these attacks confirm that the DRV has ordered a more aggressive course of action against both American and South Vietnamese installations. Such attacks are said to be made possible by the continuing infiltration of personnel and equipment from North Vietnam, which has markedly increased during 1964. The statement stresses that the joint response is limited to military areas which are supplying men and arms for attacks in South Vietnam. As was the case in the reprisal to the Gulf of Tonkin attacks, the response "is appropriate and fitting." It concludes: "As the U.S. Government has frequently stated, we seek no wider war. Whether or not this course can be maintained lies with the North Vietnamese aggressors. The key to the situation remains the cessation of infiltration from North Viet-Nam and the clear indication by the Hanoi regime that it is prepared to cease aggression against its neighbors." *(90th Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (3d Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate (Washington: GPO, 1967), p. 132, citing Department of State Bulletin, vol 52, pp. 238-39.)*

7 February-- On 1 February 1966, Roger Hilsman, Director of the Department of State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research under President Kennedy and Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs from 1963-March 1964, tells the Zablocki Subcommittee of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs that the bombing of North Vietnam "put an obstacle in the way of steps furthering the detente with the Soviet Union and thus

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strengthened the hand of the Chinese in their dispute with the Soviets and added credibility to the Chinese argument for more belligerent Communist policies. It made it impossible for the Soviet Union to pursue their own national interest, which was to damp down the possibility of war in Southeast Asia, and thus made it impossible for the Soviets to put pressure on Hanoi for negotiations." He goes on to state that the bombing of the North was also a mistake because "it could not be effective." The bombing effort makes them employ more manpower, but "manpower is the one thing the North Vietnamese and their Chinese allies have plenty of. We must remember that this is not World War II in Western Europe. You do not destroy an underdeveloped, essentially barter economy in which most people live in villages, nor do you destroy communications lines that are dirt roads or trails and simple bridges, usually placed where there was once a ford anyway...There is no way at all of stopping guerrillas from drifting through the jungles and the only really effective way open of choking down the infiltration routes is to supplement bombing, which inhibits their making the routes into a full-scale truck road, with anti-Communist guerrillas who ambush, harass, and in effect make the Vietcong have to fight their way across Laos." He says that Asians consider bombing a "weak response." All-out bombing might still force the Communists to negotiate, but he believes that "this has wisely been ruled out as running too high a risk of general war." He adds: "Limited, measured bombing...can neither appreciably restrict the use of jungle trails for infiltration nor hurt the North Vietnamese economy enough to persuade them to quit--at least so long as they feel they have a good chance of winning the whole of the country." He favors the use of airpower and artillery in the South "only when a friendly force is locked in combat with an enemy away from villages and population centers." He argues: "Artillery and air power must be used with extreme discrimination--for to bomb a village, even though the guerrillas are using it as a base for sniping, will recruit more Vietcong than are killed." Furthermore, he states: "...if bombing the north has been a bad mistake, bombing the south has been a tragic one--for it has worked to alienate the people and thus to make the task of a true victory, a political victory, even more difficult. *(89th Cong 2d Sess, United States Policy toward Asia. Hearings before the Subcommittee on the Far East and the Pacific of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives (Washington: GPO, 1966), pt 1, pp. 142-43.)*

7 February et seq.-- Writing while in retirement in the winter of 1967-1968, George W. Ball, who had been Under Secretary of State under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, says that the bombing of North Vietnam began at a time when the fortunes and morale of the South Vietnamese were at a very low ebb. There was political confusion

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in Saigon, the fighting was going badly, and "there was a desperate feeling both in Saigon and Washington that something had to be done to raise South Vietnamese morale and change the direction of the battle." He states that the initial decision was justified as retaliation for North Vietnamese terror attacks. Once bombing was begun, however, there was a compelling pressure to continue and to escalate. He suggests that bombing cannot critically reduce the flow of supplies to a guerrilla force which lives off the country and has a very low logistic requirement. He observes that "the sophisticated lethal instruments which are the products of advanced technology are of only marginal use in a war against primitive peoples, and if the terrain is suitable for guerrilla warfare the advantages of advanced technology are even more limited." He also argues that bombing cannot force the DRV to the conference table because North Vietnam is an agrarian subsistence economy, a police state, and has the support of major Communist powers. Based on this analysis, he urges: "Under these circumstances continued bombing is not likely to break the people's will in any way that can be translated into a political decision favorable to us; it is more likely to push them toward a harder position." Ball also points out that the "bombing offensive cannot be considered solely in terms of its military utility; it adds a dangerous and confusing political element that did not exist before the bombing began." As long as the Viet Cong were fighting a "war of national liberation", Communist doctrine dictated that the major Communist powers should assist the guerrillas with materiel. They were not, however, committed to underwriting the success of the insurgency. But once the United States launched a bombing offensive against North Vietnam, a new war began, or at least a war in which the old ground rules were altered. He explains: "...the great Communist powers necessarily regarded the bombing as an attack by their natural antagonist, the leading 'imperialist power,' on a fellow Socialist Republic, which created quite a new set of pressures and problems." To Communist China, Ball points out, the bombing offensive endangers the life of the DRV as a buffer state. It also seems likely that escalation of the bombing could trigger a Chinese reaction; concievably the Communist rulers might seize the opportunity to launch an attack against the United States in order to unite their own badly fragmented country. In addition, Ball suggests that the bombing campaign tends to frustrate any Soviet inclination towards peacemaking. Each time that there has been a suspicion of a Soviet initiative in this direction, Peking immediately berates the Kremlin. Moreover, as long as North Vietnam is being bombed, Hanoi cannot find a "face-saving formula that could permit it to withdraw its forces and support from the Viet Cong struggle in

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the South...for it to offer an olive branch while under direct attack from the United States could hardly be explained as a victory by even the most outrageous Communist dialectic." *(George W. Ball, The Discipline of Power, Essentials of a Modern World Structure (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1968), pp. 317-25.)*

8 February-- The Central Committee of the National Liberation Front issues a statement condemning US air strikes in North Vietnam. It declares: "The Vietnamese people are one. Any aggressive act of the U.S. imperialists against North Vietnam constitutes a challenge to all Vietnamese people. The Presidium of the Central Committee of the NLF calls on the troops and people of South Vietnam to unite to heighten vigilance...and to step up all political and military activities." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), pp. 331-32.)*

8 February-- Referring to the US air strikes against the North, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam issues a statement charging that the United States, in an attempt to retrieve its failures in South Vietnam, is stepping up its aggression. The DRV denounces and protests these new "acts of war and demands that the US strictly implement the Geneva Agreements, respect the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Vietnam, stop its aggressive war in South Vietnam and all acts of war against the DRV. The North Vietnamese "earnestly request" the co-chairmen and participating governments of the Geneva Conference, the socialist countries, and all "peace-loving" nations to "take timely and effective actions aimed at staying the hands of the U.S. imperialist aggressors..., ensuring strict implementation of the 1954 Geneva agreements..." *("D.R.V. Government Statement - New U.S. War Provocation Strongly Denounced", Peking Review, VIII, no. 7 (12 February 1965), p. 8.)*

9 February-- A Chinese Government statement is issued defending the Viet Cong attacks on Pleiku and condemning the US air strikes against North Vietnam. The statement argues: "Since the U.S. aggressors have come from thousands of miles away to southern Viet Nam..., why can't the south Vietnamese people give tit-for-tat in dealing with the aggressors?" It warns that "the United States has already embarked on the course of expanding the war beyond south Viet Nam. The question now is whether or not it will continue along this course. This does not lie with anyone else; it lies solely with the U.S. Government itself. Since the United States has, in flagrant violation of the Geneva agreements of 1954, made further attacks on the territory of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam from the military bases and aircraft carriers serving its armed aggression in southern Viet Nam, the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam has gained the right of action to fight against U.S. aggression, and all the other countries upholding the Geneva agreements have gained the right of action to assist the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam in its fight against aggression. As to how this right will

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be exercised, that is our affair. The situation is continuing to develop...The Democratic Republic of Viet Nam is a member of the socialist camp and all the other socialist countries have the unshirkable international obligation to support and assist it with actual deeds... Aggression by the United States against the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam means aggression against China; the 650 million Chinese people will definitely not stand idly by and are well prepared in this respect. *("Chinese Government Statement - China Is Well Prepared to Assist D.R.V. Against U.S. Aggression", Peking Review, VIII, no. 7 (12 February 1965, pp. 7-8.)*

9 February-- An editorial in China's Jenmin Jih Pao condemns the "new and utterly grave act of war by the United States against the D.R.V. ..." It accuses the Johnson Administration of using the Pleiku incidents as a pretext for attacking the North. This action "once again teaches the people of the world a lesson: the aggressive nature of U.S. imperialism will not change; the closer its doomsday, the more desperately does it fight...[I]n dealing with U.S. imperialism, which is aggressive by nature, the only way to check its aggression, safeguard national sovereignty and independence and preserve world peace is to wage a tit-for-tat struggle against it, to pay it back in its own coin, by peaceful means or by force, whichever it may resort to. Anyone who thinks that U.S. imperialism will give up in adversity, that the Johnson Administration is peace-loving, sensible and realistic, is actually rendering service to U.S. imperialism." It once again warns that "aggression against the D.R.V. means aggression against [China]..." *("U.S. Aggressors Must Be Punished", Peking Review, VIII, no. 7 (12 February 1965), pp. 17-18.)*

9 February-- A Soviet Government statement is issued condemning the US air strikes against North Vietnam. It rejects Washington's explanation that these actions are in retaliation for VC guerrilla activities in the South: "But who gave the United States the right to retaliate against the actions of guerrillas in South Viet Nam, the defeats that the occupationists and their henchmen are suffering there, by bombing the territory of a third country—the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam?" It states: "It seems that Washington simply cannot give up the illusion that aggression against the DRV can be carried out with impunity...The Soviet Union has invariably come out for the establishment of normal relations with the United States, for their improvement. But the development of relations requires mutuality and there can be no misunderstanding about this. This process is incompatible with aggressive manifestations in politics,

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which are likely to reduce to naught various steps undertaken in the interests of improving Soviet-American relations... In the face of the above-mentioned actions of the United States, the Soviet Union will be forced together with its allies and friends to take further measures to safeguard the security and strengthen the defence capability of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. No-one should doubt that the Soviet Union will do this, that the Soviet people will discharge its international duty by the fraternal socialist country." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Viet Nam, no. 2 of 1965 (Canberra: GPO), pp. 4-5.)*

9 February-- The DRV sends a letter to the co-chairmen of the Geneva Conference stating that the US air attack against North Vietnam is a "new, extremely dangerous act of war" against the DRV. It accuses the Americans of attempting to retrieve their defeat in the South by stepping up the war there and "increasing provocations and acts of sabotage against North Vietnam": "Since 5th August, 1964, in defiance of the protests of world opinion, the United States has staged over 20 air or naval raids of provocation and sabotage against the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, while endeavouring to expand the war in Laos and perpetrating repeated violations of the territory of Cambodia... Now, while staging the 7th and 8th February attack against the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, the US Government has impudently decided to send additional military forces to South Viet Nam, at the same time it has resorted to making base slanders against the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, and bringing its aggressive act to the notice of the UN Security Council." The DRV "energetically denounces and protests against the new US war acts against the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the dispatch of additional US troops, weapons and other war materials to South Viet Nam. It resolutely demands that the US Government correctly implement the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Viet Nam, respect the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Viet Nam, and stop at once the aggressive war in South Viet Nam and all acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam." It requests the co-chairmen and participants in the 1954 Geneva Conference and "all peace-loving countries" to "take timely and effective actions" to check imperialist aggression and "ensure a correct implementation" of the Geneva Agreements. *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Viet Nam, no. 2 of 1965 (Canberra: GPO), pp. 7-8.)*

10 February-- The American bombing of North Vietnam is followed by mass rallies in China, often addressed by leading political

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figures. Peng Chen, member of the Politburo of the Chinese Communist Party (CPC) and Mayor of Peking, on 10 February speaks to the gathering assembled in Peking. He states that the "entire Chinese people certainly will take concrete action to give firm support to the Vietnamese people in their righteous struggle against U.S. aggression and in defence of their motherland...The latest events have once again demonstrated that all aggressors are only paper tigers. U.S. imperialism is such a paper tiger now being beaten everywhere in the world." Central Committee member Liu Ning-I then declares that the "U.S. aggressor's further encroachment on the territory of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam has given the latter the initiative and the right of action to fight against the U.S. imperialist aggression...[and since South Vietnamese air units participated in the air strikes against the DRV] the right of action to repulse the offensive of the south Vietnamese puppet troops. It is the affairs of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam as to how it will exercise these rights. However, the forces of aggression of U.S. imperialism and the south Vietnamese puppet troops are henceforth forever placed in a passive position." *("Intensify Efforts and Increase Preparedness to Support Viet Nam!" and "Chinese People Ready to Fight Alongside Their Vietnamese Brothers", Peking Review, VIII, no. 7 (12 February 1965), pp. 11-12.)*

10 February-- Following the visit to Hanoi of Soviet Premier Kosygin (who had been in the capital at the time of the bombing raids), a joint Soviet-DRV statement is issued announcing new Soviet aid to North Vietnam and condemning the "barbarous attacks" of the US Air Force. The communique declares: "These extremely dangerous acts constituted at the same time provocations against the entire socialist camp and the whole mankind which is struggling for peace, freedom and justice...The Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics once again reaffirms that, abiding by the principles of socialist internationalism, the Soviet Government cannot remain indifferent to the ensuring of the security of this fraternal socialist country and will extend the necessary assistance and support to the DRV. The two Governments have reached an appropriate agreement on the measures to be carried out with a view to consolidating the defence of the DRV and have agreed to hold regular exchanges of views on the above-mentioned questions...The two sides unanimously note that for the past ten years and more, the US Government has sabotaged the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Viet Nam, sought to hinder the reunification of Viet Nam and turned South Viet Nam into a new type colony and a military base of the US. It has illegally brought to South Viet Nam tens of thousands of servicemen and officers, large quantities of weapons and war materials and is conducting an inhuman and atrocious 'special' war against the South Vietnamese people. In face of this very

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dangerous situation the South Vietnamese people have been forced to take up arms to wage a struggle for self-liberation... The Soviet Union fully supports the just and heroic struggle... which the South Vietnamese people are waging under the leadership of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation...The DRV and the Soviet Union resolutely condemn the schemes of the US imperialists to expand their armed intervention in the Indo-Chinese area, to drag the SEATO military bloc and the ANZUS bloc into this intervention. These schemes will inevitably meet with failure...The two Governments firmly stand for the defence and implementation of the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Indo-China, resolutely oppose the US violations of the said agreements, and demand that all participants of the 1954 Geneva Conference respect and correctly implement them...The two sides unanimously declare that the only correct way to settle the South Viet Nam problem is: the US must correctly implement the Geneva Agreements, end at once the aggressive war, withdraw all its troops, military personnel and weapons from South Viet Nam, stop all interference in South Viet Nam's affairs and let the South Vietnamese people settle by themselves their internal affairs..." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs--Vietnam, no. 2 of 1965 (Canberra: GPO), pp. 8-9.)*

11 February-- The White House issues a statement which reveals that US air elements have joined with the VNAF in attacking military facilities in North Vietnam "used by Hanoi for the training and infiltration of Viet Cong personnel into South Viet-Nam." These actions are said to be in response to further "direct provocations by the Hanoi regime." Since 8 February a large number of South Vietnamese and American personnel have been killed in an increased number of VC ambushes and attacks. The statement concludes: "While maintaining their desire to avoid spreading the conflict, the two Governments felt compelled to take the action described above." *(Richard P. Stebbins, ed., Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1965 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1966), pp. 130-31.)*

12 February-- UN Secretary-General U Thant issues a statement on the escalating war in Vietnam: "I am greatly disturbed by recent events in South-East Asia, and particularly by the seriously deteriorating situation in Viet Nam. My fear, frankly, is in regard to the dangerous possibilities of escalation, because such a situation, if it should once get out of control, would obviously pose the gravest threat to the peace of the world...I have stated my views on this problem many times before. Only last year, when I was interviewed in Paris in July, I said that military methods have failed to find a solution of the South-East Asian problem

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for the last ten years and I do not believe the same methods will bring about a peaceful settlement of the problem. I have always maintained that only political and diplomatic methods of negotiation and discussion may find a peaceful solution. I have suggested some time ago that a return to the conference table might produce some results. That means, in effect, that a revival of the Geneva Conference may perhaps achieve some results... I am aware that there are many difficulties in the way of attempting a United Nations solution to the problem, in view of its past history and the fact that some of the principal parties are not represented in the United Nations. Many other leaders who, I know, share this concern and anxiety have made other suggestions. At the present time it is not possible for me to say what would be the best means of discussing this serious situation in an atmosphere conducive to a positive solution. But I do feel very strongly that means must be found, and found urgently, within or outside the United Nations, of shifting the quest for a solution away from the field of battle to the conference table. In this connexion I believe that arrangements could be devised under which a dialogue could take place between the principal parties with a view, among others, to preparing the ground for wider and more formal discussions...Meanwhile I would like to appeal most earnestly to all the parties concerned for the utmost restraint in both deeds and words, and I would urge them to refrain from any new acts which may lead to an escalation of the present conflict and to the aggravation of a situation which is already very serious." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 2 of 1965 (Canberra: GPO), p. 9.)*

13 February-- The Indian and Polish representatives of the International Control Commission for Vietnam officially inform the co-chairmen of the 1954 Geneva Conference of US and ARVN air attacks against North Vietnam. The report says that official documents filed by DRV and RVN "point to the seriousness of the situation and indicate violations of the Geneva Agreement." It requests the co-chairmen "consider the desirability of issuing an immediate appeal to all concerned with a view to reducing tension and preserving peace in Viet-Nam and taking whatever measures are necessary in order to stem the deteriorating situation." The Canadian representative agrees that a report be made to the co-chairmen, but dissents from the terms of the report. *(Marcus G. Raskin and Bernard B. Fall, eds., The Viet-Nam Reader (New York: Random House, 1965), pp. 274-76.)*

13-15 February-- On 13 February, Peking recalls that it has "declared long since that aggression against the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam means aggression against China, and the

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Chinese people have been prepared and know how to aid the people of Viet Nam and Indo-China in driving out U.S. aggressors." Two days later, a Peking People's Daily editorial warns that if the United States sends troops beyond the 17th parallel, China will enter the Vietnamese conflict and also reopen the Korean war. It says: "If the United States expands the war in Viet Nam, the front will expand from Viet Nam to Korea." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), pp. 152-53.)*

16 February-- The Chinese later charge that on this date Moscow officially proposed to the DRV and Peking that a conference be held on Indochina without preliminary conditions. *(Donald S. Zagoria, Vietnam Triangle (New York: Pegasus, 1967), p. 152.)*

19 February-- China's Jenmin Jih Pao publishes an editorial disparaging US efforts to win the war in South Vietnam by bombing the North. It remarks that "even if all 12 U.S. aircraft carriers in the Pacific are deployed in this area it would only mean 12 more airfields on the sea. What can a few more aircraft carriers do since the outcome of the war in south Vietnam has to be decided on land?" *(Peking Review, VIII, no. 9 (26 February 1965), p. 12.)*

22 February-- In Moscow, Soviet Communist Party Chief Leonid Brezhnev and Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko reportedly inform the visiting Indian Minister of Information that convening a conference on Indochina would be "a step in the right direction" in preventing an escalation of the conflict in Vietnam. This same day, Deputy Foreign Minister Lapin tells the British Ambassador in Moscow that the Soviets will cooperate with the United Kingdom as co-chairman of the Geneva Conference. *(Donald S. Zagoria, Vietnam Triangle (New York: Pegasus, 1967), p. 152.)*

23 February-- British Prime Minister Harold Wilson announces that his Government is "actively engaged in diplomatic consultations of a confidential nature" with the Soviet Union to discover whether Moscow is interested in reviving the British-Soviet co-chairmanship of the 1954 Geneva Conference. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 153.)*

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23 February-- In Paris after a meeting with President de Gaulle, Soviet Ambassador Sergei A. Vinogradov voices Moscow's support for the French President's proposals for a negotiated settlement in Vietnam. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 154.)*

24 February-- UN Secretary-General U Thant informs a news conference that he has presented "concrete ideas and proposals" to "some of the principal parties directly involved in the question of Viet Nam." Thant reveals that his proposals include negotiations which "alone can create conditions which will enable the United States to withdraw gracefully from that part of the world." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 153.)*

26 February-- The New York Times reports that the "Communist Government of North Vietnam has notified UN Secretary-General U Thant that it is receptive to his suggestion for informal negotiations on the Vietnam situation." *(Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs, Mission to Hanoi (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), p. 28.)*

March-- General Vo Nguyen Giap, in an interview with a Japanese journalist, alters the conditions for a settlement of the war that he had issued on 1 November 1964. He now drops his demands on Laos and Cambodia and adds the condition of a halt to American air strikes: "The United States government must stop at once its acts of provocation, sabotage, and aggression against the DRV and immediately [stop] the aggressive war in South Vietnam, withdraw U.S. troops and weapons from there, and let the South Vietnamese people settle their own affairs by themselves in accordance with the program of the NLFSV." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 327.)*

March-- French scholar and journalist Jean Lacouture speaks with a "leading personality" of the NLF. Lacouture later discloses: "But what did this leader of the Front think of the Sino-Soviet conflict? He considered it 'criminal,' at a time when the problem still was to build socialism. He was as critical of the Chinese as he was of the Russians: he condemned the schism rather than the policy of the one or the other. Moreover, he did not hide—we were having this talk in March 1965—his disappointment with the passivity of these two great socialist

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states in the face of American intervention in North Vietnam... But it was impossible to learn what the diplomatic objectives of the Front were. Was American withdrawal still the first condition to all negotiations? The Front was very reserved on that subject." Lacouture also asks the Front leader about other facets of the war. He is reported as replying:

"The resumption of the war? It dates from 1959. It was impossible to avoid it. There was pressure at the base. Since 1958 we have conducted polls. An old peasant told me: 'If you do not enter the struggle, we will turn away from you.' We waited too long—we were opportunist-pacifist from 1954 to 1958. We hesitated to draw the consequences from the Diemist dictatorship and its excesses.

But aid from the North is very secondary. All aid coming to us from the outside is contrary to the guerrilla spirit and the popular struggle. Guerrillas don't fight well except with what they have conquered or created.

Buddhism? We see in it an aspect of straddling the fence, a sort of elementary neutralism. Buddhism has a nationalist aspect that makes it oppose the Americans. It also has a reactionary aspect that divides it from the Front and prevents it from really joining us. If there are many honest and sincere men among the Buddhists, the movement is also infiltrated with all sorts of foreign agents...

The students? Most often they are of bourgeois origin and tend to behave as such. Most characteristic of that milieu is confusion. Many among them are still under the influence of the Dai Viet. But a profound evolution is visible in their ranks, and can proceed only in a way favorable to our cause..." *(Jean Lacouture, Vietnam (New York: Random House, 1966), pp. 174-77.)*

3 March-- Soviet Premier Kosygin is reported by Le Monde as stating that the "friends of peace ask for a strict application of the Geneva accords in order to prevent an escalation of the conflict to all of Southeast Asia and to find at a conference table the measures permitting a solution of the Indochinese problems..." *(Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs, Mission to Hanoi (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), p. 286.)*

4 March-- A Chinese Government statement rejects the contention of the US State Department's white paper, Aggression From the North (released the previous month), that the guerrilla

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movement in South Vietnam is "a campaign inspired, directed, supplied and controlled" by Hanoi. Rather, Peking contends, it is the United States which has obstructed the peaceful reunification of Vietnam in accordance with the Geneva Agreements. Now that its military strategy has failed to defeat the South Vietnamese people, the US is vainly trying to blackmail them into abandoning their just struggle by threatening the war's expansion. As for negotiations: "The American press is bluntly saying that the U.S. Government wants to negotiate from the 'position of strength.' The U.S. Government attempts to bring about honourable peace negotiations by bombing the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. What it calls honourable peace negotiations is nothing but an attempt to make the Vietnamese people stop fighting and tolerate continued U.S. aggression in Viet Nam. This is mere wishful thinking. Viet Nam will not agree, nor will any of the countries which truly uphold the Geneva agreements. Unless one is bent on selling out the interests of the Vietnamese people, how can one bow to the U.S. war blackmail? There is indeed an honourable way out for the United States, that is, to admit her mistakes without delay and immediately stop her armed intervention and aggression in Viet Nam and immediately withdraw all her armed forces from south Viet Nam in accordance with the 1954 Geneva agreements. This is the only way for the United States to save face, and there is no other way out." *("Chinese Government Statement—Resolute Support for Viet Nam, Struggle Against U.S. Imperialism To The End", Peking Review, VIII, no. 11 (12 March 1965), pp. 6-7.)*

9 March-- The Central Committee of the NLF issues a statement with respect to the intensified US war effort in Vietnam. It declares: "The acts of the US imperialists can in no way hamper the development of the revolutionary movement in South Viet Nam. The South Vietnamese people are resolved to achieve their fundamental aspirations which are independence, democracy, peace and neutrality. They are resolved to drive the US imperialists out of Vietnamese territory, overthrow the puppet regime and set up a national democratic coalition government. The situation in South Viet Nam can stabilize only when the aspirations of the South Vietnamese people are realized." *("Chinese Government Statement—Support People of Viet Nam and Indo-China, Fight U.S. Aggression To the End", Peking Review, VIII, no. 12 (19 March 1965), p. 6.)*

12 March-- A Chinese Government statement declares: "On 8th and 9th March, the Johnson Administration of the United States flagrantly dispatched 3,500 marines to South Viet Nam. After making four air attacks against the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam within one month, the US imperialists have thrown their ground forces into the war in South Viet Nam. This is a grave move to further expand the war in Indo-China...

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The dispatch of US ground forces to South Viet Nam has further blocked the way to a political settlement of the Viet Nam question. The Johnson Administration has the impudence to assert that 'political channels are open'. What is the political channel for the settlement of the question of Viet Nam and the whole of Indo-China? It is to act in accordance with the Geneva agreements. In its statement of 10th March, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam demanded 'that the US Government strictly implement the 1954 Geneva agreements on Viet Nam, stop immediately the aggressive war in South Viet Nam and all acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, withdraw all US troops and war equipment from South Viet Nam, and let the South Vietnamese people settle their own internal affairs themselves.' The Chinese Government resolutely supports the just demands of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. The United States must immediately stop its aggression and provocations against Viet Nam. US armed forces must be completely withdrawn from Viet Nam. This is the channel, and the only channel, for a political settlement of the Viet Nam question...The expansion of US aggression can only serve to give the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and all countries upholding the Geneva agreements the right to take the initiative in dealing counter-blows. In the last few days, the US press has been loudly clamouring that, in the Vietnamese war, there would no longer be any 'sanctuary' such as existed during the Korean war and that the United States would engage in 'hot pursuit' of those giving support to the struggle of the Vietnamese people. In plain language, this means that it would bomb China. Let us tell the US aggressors that the Chinese people are not afraid of such stuff...The Chinese people will firmly and unswervingly take all possible measures to support the people of Viet Nam and the whole of Indo-China in carrying the struggle against the US aggressors through to the very end. Anyhow, you have only so much armed strength at your disposal, and for all your clamouring, the means you can resort to are but that many. You may act in your way and we will act in our way. But this much is certain: the course of war will not follow your subjective wishes. And the final outcome of the struggle can only be the ousting of the US aggressors from Viet Nam, from Indo-China and from the whole of South-East Asia." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 2 of 1965 (Canberra: GPO), pp. 19-20.)*

13 March-- The DRV terms the 8 March landing of US Marines at Danang "an open delcaration of war on the entire Vietnamese people" and says: "We will take all necessary measures to defend ourselves and annihilate the United States aggressors." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 154.)*

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15 March-8 April-- The "Belgrade Peace Appeal" of 17 nonaligned nations is signed and presented to the United States on April. This appeal calls on all parties concerned "to start...negotiations, as soon as possible, without posing any preconditions, so that a political solution to the problem of Vietnam may be found in accordance with the legitimate aspirations of the Vietnamese people and in the spirit of the Geneva Agreement of Vietnam and of the Declaration of the Conference on Nonaligned Countries held in Cairo." A White House statement issued on 8 April replies that peace can be achieved in Southeast Asia the moment that aggression from North Vietnam is eliminated. The United States will be ready and eager to withdraw its forces from Vietnam when conditions have been created in which the South Vietnamese people can determine their future free from external interference. The United States also hopes that all countries will join in helping the nations of Southeast Asia in their efforts to improve the life of their people, as the United States has already proposed to do. *(Richard P. Stebbins, ed., Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1965 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1966), pp. 136-40.)*

19 March-- Referring to attempts by Yugoslav President Tito to mobilize the nonaligned nations behind an effort to open negotiations to end the fighting in Vietnam (see 15 March-8 April entry), the DRV states: "Tito has thus played the role of a stoolpigeon of the United States in this peace fraud...There can be no question of negotiating with American imperialism at a time when it openly declares and brazenly steps up the war of aggression in South Vietnam and extends this war to North Vietnam..." *(Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs, Mission to Hanoi (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), p. 292.)*

20-21 March-- In an interview published in the Manila Times, Chou En-lai says that Communist China is "against world war and would never provoke it" and that it has "shown restraint" in Vietnam, although this "restraint has limits." He adds that China does not fear the United States since American forces are scattered all over the globe. On 21 March, in another interview, Foreign Minister Chen Yi states that China will actively fight in Vietnam if US troops invade the DRV or if the North Vietnamese Government requests them to enter the war. He says that China has prepared for participation in a Southeast Asian war since 1954, but notes: "We have no right to take the initiative. We cannot decide to send our troops today. It would be possible for us, but we do not want to send troops into Southeast Asia beyond our frontiers, to give the imperialists the pretext to shout that the Communist threat is knocking at the door. It is only in case of a legitimate defense that we use our forces and fight. But if

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the countries which are our friends ask for our help, we will not fail to do it." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 155.)*

22 March-- The Central Committee of the National Liberation Front issues a statement reaffirming the following points: "1: The U.S. imperialists are the saboteurs of the Geneva Agreements, the most brazen warmongers and aggressors and the sworn enemy of the Vietnamese people...The Vietnamese people are deeply aware of the value of these [Geneva] Agreements. Now as in the past they have been correctly implementing these Agreements and are resolved to have these Agreements implemented in their spirit and letters as all international agreements with full legal validity should be... 2: The heroic South Vietnamese people are resolved to drive out the U.S. imperialists in order to liberate South Vietnam, achieve an independent, democratic, peaceful, and neutral South Vietnam and eventual national reunification...All negotiations with the U.S. imperialists at this moment are entirely useless if they still refuse to withdraw from South Vietnam all their troops and all kinds of war materials and means and those of their satellites, if they still do not dismantle all their military bases in South Vietnam, if the traitors still surrender the South Vietnamese people's sacred rights to independence and democracy to the U.S. imperialists, and if the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation—the only genuine representative of the fourteen million South Vietnamese people—does not have its decisive say...3: The valiant South Vietnamese people and the South Vietnam liberation army are resolved to fully accomplish their sacred duty to drive out the U.S. imperialists so as to liberate South Vietnam and defend North Vietnam...4: The South Vietnamese people express their profound gratitude to the wholehearted support of the peace- and justice-loving people all over the world and declare their readiness to receive all assistance, including weapons and all other war materials from their friends in the five continents...5: The whole people to unite, the whole people to take up arms, to continue to march forward heroically, and to resolve to fight and to defeat the U.S. aggressors and Vietnamese traitors." *("Statement by the National Liberation Front", in George M Kahin and John W. Lewis, The United States in Vietnam (New York: Dial Press, 1967), pp. 415-21.)*

22 March-- The DRV sends a letter to the members of the 1954 Geneva Conference demanding that "the U.S. Government respect and correctly implement the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam, put an immediate end to its war acts against the DRV, withdraw from South Vietnam all arms, military personnel and troops of

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the United States and its satellites, and let the South Vietnamese people settle by themselves their own affairs." *(Foreign Broadcasts Information Service, Daily Report, 24 March 1965, p. JJJ 1.)*

24 March-- The National Liberation Front broadcasts a statement over Radio Hanoi that the people of South Vietnam are "ready to receive all assistance, including weapons and other war materials, from their friends in the five continents." The statement also says: "If the United States imperialists continue to commit United States combat troops and those of their satellites to South Viet Nam and continue to extend the war to North Viet Nam and Laos, the South Viet Nam National Liberation Front will call on the people of various countries to send youth and army men to South Viet Nam to side with the South Vietnamese people in annihilating the common enemy." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 155.)*

ca. 25 March-- The official DRV army newspaper, Quan Doi Nhan Dan (People's Army) notably does not pick up the NLF allusion of 24 March to a possible appeal by the Viet Cong to the Chinese. It merely indicates that the regroupees in the North since 1954 are "prepared to respond at any time to the appeal of the NLFSV" by returning to the South. *(Quoted in Peking's Jenmin Jih Pao (People's Daily), 26 March 1965.)*

25 March-- In competition with the Soviet Union, China's statements of support for the NLF grow steadily more militant and less equivocal, culminating in an open offer of troops by People's Daily: "We now solemnly declare that we Chinese people firmly respond to the NLFSV statement and will join the people of the world in sending all necessary material aid, including arms and all other war materials, to the heroic South Vietnamese people who are battling fearlessly. At the same time we are ready to send our own men, whenever the South Vietnamese people want them, to fight together with the South Vietnamese people..." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 338.)*

26 March-- The Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party ratifies a defense pact between the Soviet Union and North Vietnam aimed at "repelling aggression on the part of United States imperialism." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 155.)*

27 March-- The Los Angeles Times quotes Soviet Ambassador to the US Anatoly F. Dobrynin as saying that the USSR "could not do much to arrange a settlement in Vietnam until the United States stopped bombing North Vietnamese targets." *(Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs, Mission to Hanoi (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), p. 294.)*

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28 March-- In reply to the DRV letter of 22 March, Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi states that the Chinese Government and people "fully support" the demands of the North Vietnamese Government. He declares that the "Chinese people will exert every effort to send the heroic South Vietnamese people the necessary material aid, including arms and all other war material, and stand ready to dispatch their men to fight shoulder to shoulder with the South Vietnamese people whenever the latter so require." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam (Canberra: GPO), pp. 25-26.)*

29 March-- Late March and April mark the initial tide of what appears to be a genuine Chinese concern that the war in Vietnam might spill over into China and force it to intervene directly. A Jenmin Jih Pao editorial remarks on the significance of US actions for Chinese security: "We are fully aware that American imperialism, in occupying South Vietnam by armed force and in encroaching upon North Vietnam, has as its next goal invading China. The Vietnamese people's anti-American struggle is a great support for the Chinese people; their struggle is also our struggle. There can only be peace in Vietnam, Indochina, and Asia when the American aggressors have been driven out of Vietnam. And only then can China's peace and security be preserved. To aid the Vietnamese people is the sacred internationalist duty of the Chinese people." *(Jenmin Jih Pao, 29 March 1965.)*

April-- The Chinese theoretical journal Red Flag states that the "new leadership of the CPSU still cling to Khrushchev's so-called 'peaceful coexistence' and continue to regard it as 'the general line of foreign policy of the CPSU and the Soviet Government'. They have assiduously spread the idea that 'sufficiently broad areas for co-operation exist' between the Soviet Union and the United States and have engaged in secret diplomacy with US imperialism in a big way. Although they have uttered a few high-sounding words on the Viet Nam question and made some gestures of support, all of this is done only after the sympathetic understanding of the bandit chiefs of US imperialism has been sought, and is kept within the bounds of not impairing their line of Soviet-US co-operation. The be all and end all of this is that they want to join hands with the United States and engage in the fraud of 'peace talks'. They are doing all they can in a vain attempt to bring the Vietnamese people's patriotic and just struggle against US aggression into the orbit of 'solving problems' through Soviet-US talks in order to attain their criminal objective of Soviet-US collaboration for the domination of the world. Like Khrushchev, the new leadership of the CPSU are, in the name of 'peaceful coexistence', plainly substituting class collaboration for class struggle in the international

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sphere. This 'peaceful coexistence' of theirs can only be capitulationist coexistence..." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 2 of 1965 (Canberra: GPO), pp. 47-48.)*

April-- The Soviet-dominated international journal World Marxist Review discusses the March meeting in Moscow of pro-Soviet Communist parties. It states that the communique of that gathering stressed that "'now, more than ever before, it is necessary for all Communist parties to show their sense of internationalist responsibility' and to unite for the common struggle against imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism and...for active support to the liberation movement...The meeting called for joint action by all the fraternal parties in the struggle against the common enemy and for common aims. It stressed that the cohesion of all the revolutionary forces of our time — the socialist world system, and national-liberation movement and the international working class — was of decisive importance for the success of the struggle against imperialist reaction." *("Unity of Action of the World Communist Movement", World Marxist Review, VIII, no. 4 (April 1965), p. 3.)*

1 April-- William Warbey, member of the British Parliament on the Labor ticket, writes a letter to the London Times concerning his recent interview with DRV Premier Pham Van Dong. He reports: "What then holds up a peace conference of interested parties, and the ending of slaughter in Vietnam? North Vietnamese insistence on withdrawal of American forces from South Vietnam as a pre-condition of their participation in a Conference? No. Mr Pham Van Dong was emphatic that this was not a pre-condition; it was, he said, a subject to be discussed and arranged at the Conference itself. The only pre-condition is a cease-fire; the Americans and the South Vietnamese Air Force must stop their attacks on North Vietnam." *(Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs, Mission to Hanoi (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), p. 296.)*

6 April-- Chinese Communist Premier Chou En-lai replies through an intermediary to U Thant's appeal for negotiations to end the Vietnam conflict. Chou indicates that any negotiations will have to be undertaken directly with the Viet Cong rather than with Communist China or the DRV. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 156.)*

7 April-- In a major policy address at Johns Hopkins University, President Johnson says that "North Viet-Nam has attacked the independent nation of South Viet-Nam. Its object is complete conquest." He admits that "some of the people of South Viet-Nam are participating in attack on their own government.

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But trained men and supplies, orders and arms, flow in a constant stream from north to south. This support is the heartbeat of the war." He finds the People's Republic of China in the background. "Over this war--and all Asia--is another reality: the deepening shadow of Communist China. The rulers in Hanoi are urged on by Peking." Because of stepped-up attacks on South Vietnam, the US has found it necessary to increase its response and to attack by air. This is not, he emphasizes, a change in purpose. He explains the reason for air attacks: "We do this in order to slow down aggression. We do this to increase the confidence of the brave people of South Vietnam who have bravely borne this brutal battle for so many years with so many casualties. And we do this to convince the leaders of North Vietnam--and all who seek to share their conquest--of a very simple fact: We will not be defeated. We will not grow tired. We will not withdraw, either openly or under the cloak of a meaningless agreement. We know that air attacks alone will not accomplish all of these purposes. But it is our best and prayerful judgment that they are a necessary part of the surest road to peace." The President also devotes part of his address to proposals to be supported by the United States for massive economic development in Southeast Asia. *(Public Papers of the Presidents, Lyndon B. Johnson, 1965 (Washington: GPO, 1966), vol 1, pp. 394-99.)*

8 April-- Prime Minister Pham Van Dong, on behalf of the DRV National Assembly, states Communist terms for a political settlement as follows: "1. Recognition of the basic national rights of the Vietnamese people: peace, independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. According to the Geneva Agreements, the U.S. Government must withdraw from South Vietnam all U.S. troops, military personnel and weapons of all kinds, dismantle all U.S. military bases there, cancel its 'military alliance' with South Vietnam. It must end its policy of intervention and aggression in South Vietnam. According to the Geneva Agreements, the U.S. Government must stop its acts of war against North Vietnam, completely cease all encroachments on the territory and sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. 2. Pending the peaceful reunification of Vietnam, while Vietnam is still temporarily divided into two zones, the military provisions of the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam must be strictly respected: the two zones must refrain from joining any military alliance with foreign countries, there must be no foreign military bases, troops and military personnel in their respective territory. 3. The internal affairs of South Vietnam must be

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settled by the South Vietnamese people themselves, in accordance with the programme of the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation, without any foreign interference. 4. The peaceful reunification of Vietnam is to be settled by the Vietnamese people in both zones, without any foreign interference. The National Assembly and Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam hold that the above stand constitutes the basis for the most correct political settlement of the Vietnam problem. Only when this basis is recognized can there be favorable conditions to achieve a peaceful settlement of the Vietnam question and is it possible to consider the convening of an international conference of the type of the 1954 Geneva conference on Vietnam." In the months to come this "4-point plan" will be repeatedly endorsed by the NLF and reiterated by North Vietnamese officials in interviews with foreign journalists. *(Richard B. Stebbins, ed., Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1965 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1966), pp. 147-48; also, see "D.R.V. National Assembly's Appeal", Peking Review, VIII, no. 23 (23 April 1965), pp. 8-9.)*

8 April-- In response to a Cambodian request, the Soviet Union sends a message to the United Kingdom proposing the immediate convocation of an international conference to guarantee the neutrality of Cambodia. *(New York Times, 9 April 1965, p. 13.)*

9 April-- Peking Review publishes an editorial originally appearing in Akahata, organ of the Japanese Communist Party, lambasting "revisionist [i.e. Soviet] capitulation" on Vietnam. It states: "The savage war of aggression against Vietnam unleashed by U.S. imperialism... shows up once again the absurdity of the arguments prettifying U.S. imperialism, peddled everywhere by the modern revisionists as their own special line...The advocates of the thesis of 'polarization of U.S. imperialism' have been clamouring that the 'sensible group' as represented by Kennedy and Johnson should be distinguished from the 'warlike group' as represented by Goldwater and his like. This thesis has now been proved publicly and indisputably to be sheer nonsense...The illusion they created that the partial nuclear test ban treaty would bring about 'general relaxation of international tension' has been completely shattered...Chiming in with some imperialist and capitalist newspapers, they advocate 'peaceful negotiations' with U.S. imperialism in the name of seeking 'a peaceful settlement'...The only prerequisite for a peaceful solution to the Vietnam question is the

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immediate stopping of the U.S. imperialist war of aggression in Vietnam and the withdrawal of all U.S. forces from south Vietnam. Any proposal for a 'settlement of the Vietnam question' through an 'international conference' or 'political negotiations' without the realization of this prerequisite will inevitably lead, in practice, to the quagmire of capitulationism: to maintain the very status quo of U.S. imperialist aggression in Vietnam and recognize an 'armistice' which would allow U.S. imperialism to hang on in south Vietnam. Such a stand goes against the demand of the Vietnamese people that 'the Vietnam question and the peaceful unification of Vietnam be settled by the Vietnamese people themselves'...On the lips of the revisionists, the call for 'the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam' is only fine words. Their real aim is to 'settle' the Vietnam question through capitulationist 'U.S.-U.S.S.R. cooperation'...In escalating its war of aggression in Vietnam, U.S. imperialism is obviously taking advantage of the disunity in the international communist movement and the opportunist line of the modern revisionists." *("Exposure of Revisionists' Capitulationist Line on Viet Nam Question", Peking Review, VIII, no. 15 (9 April 1965), pp. 24-25.)*

9-12 April-- On 9 April, all papers in Hanoi frontpage Ho Chi Minh's answer to questions put to him by Yoshihisa Takano, correspondent of Akahata, organ of the Japanese Communist Party, at a press interview. The DRV President defines the North Vietnamese negotiating position thusly: "To settle the south Viet Nam question, the United States must, first of all, withdraw from south Viet Nam, let the south Vietnamese people decide for themselves their own affairs, and stop its provocative attacks against the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. The carrying out of these basic points will bring about favourable conditions for a conference along the pattern of the 1954 Geneva Conference. This is a reasonable and sensible approach beneficial to peace and to the U.S. people." On 12 April, Jenmin Jih Pao comments that the "Chinese Government and people fully support President Ho Chi Minh's statement. They are resolved, together with the Vietnamese people, to carry to the end the joint struggle to oust the U.S. aggressors from Viet Nam...A thousand and one things might be said about a peaceful settlement of the south Viet Nam question, but the first thing required for such a settlement is withdrawal of the U.S. troops. Whoever ignores this firm stand of the Vietnamese people and continues to play peace tricks of one kind or another can only help to

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inflate the aggressive arrogance of U.S. imperialism." The editorial goes on to describe the struggle of the DRV and NLF as a "glorious responsibility" to national liberation movements in their struggle against colonialism. It states that the "650 million Chinese people long ago resolved to stand with the Vietnamese people and to fight together with them to the very end to defeat U.S. aggression, to win peace in Indo-China and Southeast Asia and to advance the common cause of the world's people in opposing U.S. imperialism." *("President Ho Chi Minh on the Viet Nam Question", Peking Review, VIII, no. 16 (16 April 1965), pp. 6-7; "Solemn Pledge of 30 Million Vietnamese People", Peking Review, VIII, no. 16 (16 April 1965), pp. 8-9.)*

10 April-- Speaking before the DRV National Assembly, second session, third legislature, Ho Chi Minh says that the Americans attack the North because they are bogged down in the South. He declares: "They may bring in hundreds of thousands more U.S. officers and men, and strive to drag more troops of their satellites into this...war, our army and people are resolved to fight and defeat them." The DRV states "its unswerving stand...to resolutely defend Vietnam's independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. Vietnam is one country, the Vietnamese people are one nation; nobody is allowed to infringe upon this sacred right. The U.S. imperialists must respect the Geneva Agreements, withdraw from South Vietnam, and immediately stop the attacks on North Vietnam. That is the only measure to settle the war in Vietnam, to implement the 1954 Geneva Agreements, to defend peace in Indochina and South-East Asia. There is no other solution." *(Ho Chi Minh, "Speech in the National Assembly, Second Session, Third Legislature", Against U.S. Aggression, For National Salvation (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1967), pp. 67-70.)*

11 April-- Referring to President Johnson's Johns Hopkins address of 7 April, Peking's People's Daily publishes an official "Observer" article which states:

"...The talk about 'unconditional discussions' is a swindle pure and simple. In his address, Johnson raised three outrageous conditions. The first, 'an independent South Viet Nam--securely guaranteed', is actually a complete negation of the reunification of Viet Nam and the Geneva agreements. The second, that South Viet Nam must enjoy 'freedom from attack', means that the South Vietnamese people must stop their just struggle against US imperialism and its lackeys. The third, that the

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United States 'will not withdraw, either openly or under the cloak of a meaningless agreement', means that US imperialism will continue its occupation of South Viet Nam by force. Thus, Johnson's offer of 'unconditional discussions' requires that the South Vietnamese people surrender unconditionally and that the more than 30,000,000 Vietnamese people cease their just struggle for the reunification and complete liberation of their country.

The South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation solemnly declared some time ago that 'all negotiations with the US imperialists at this moment are utterly useless if they still refuse to withdraw from South Viet Nam all their troops and all kinds of war materials and means and those of their satellite countries, if they still refuse to dismantle all their military bases in South Viet Nam, if the traitors still surrender the South Vietnamese people's sacred rights to independence and democracy to the US imperialists and if the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation--the only genuine representative of the 14,000,000 South Vietnamese people--does not have its decisive voice'...

...Johnson...put forward these absolutely unacceptable conditions to the Vietnamese people. This points to a sinister motive. He is vainly trying in advance to disavow his criminal responsibility and prepare public opinion for the further spreading of the flames of war in Indo-China...

In his speech, Johnson directed the attack not only against the Vietnamese people but also against the Chinese people. Over the South Viet Nam war, he alleged, loomed 'the deepening shadow of Communist China'. China 'is a nation which is helping the forces of violence in almost every continent', he asserted. By taking so much trouble in repeatedly mentioning China by name, Johnson evidently intended to make war threats against China and stop the Chinese people from supporting the revolutionary struggles of the Vietnamese and other peoples. This is sheer daydreaming!

The Chinese people have never concealed their consistent and steadfast position of actively supporting the revolutionary struggles of the peoples. We will support all revolutionary struggles of the oppressed nations and peoples, wherever they may take place. This is a proletarian internationalist obligation of the liberated Chinese people...We would like to tell the Johnson

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Administration: Whatever you have done or may possibly do, the Chinese people will staunchly side with the Vietnamese people and fight shoulder to shoulder with them to the end for the complete defeat of the American aggressors..." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs --Vietnam, no. 2 of 1965 (Canberra: GPO), pp. 38-39.*

12 April-- Peking's People's Daily comments on U Thant's efforts to bring about a negotiated settlement in Vietnam:

"People are wondering in what capacity U Thant is doing this. If he is willing to travel around for a settlement of the Viet Nam question as a private individual, then the place where he should go is Washington, a stone's throw away, and not China and the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam on the other side of the globe...

If U Thant is undertaking this activity in the capacity of UN Secretary-General, then we should like to tell him in all seriousness to spare himself the trouble.

The Viet Nam question has nothing to do with the United Nations. The 1954 Geneva Agreements were reached outside the United Nations, and the latter has no right to interfere in the affairs of Viet Nam or of Indo-China as a whole. It is the responsibility of the Geneva conference participant nations to uphold the Geneva agreements, and no meddling by the United Nations is called for, nor will it be tolerated. This is the case; it was so in the past, and so will it remain in the future.

The United Nations is manipulated and controlled by the United States; it has degenerated into a US tool for aggression, and has done many evil things...

The United Nations has never taken a just stand on the Viet Nam question. It has absolutely no say concerning a settlement of the South Viet Nam question..."
(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs--Vietnam, no. 2 of 1965 (Canberra: GPO), pp. 39-40.)

13 April-- Before the DRV National Assembly, Premier Pham Van Dong repeats his Government's 4-point policy for ending the war. He says that the Government of the DRV "is of the view that the stand expounded above is the basis for the soundest political settlement of the Vietnam problem. If this basis is recognized, favorable conditions will be created for the peaceful settlement of the Vietnam

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problem and it will be possible to consider the reconvening of an international conference along the pattern of the 1954 Geneva Conference on Vietnam...The Government of the DRV declares that any approach contrary to the above-mentioned stand is inappropriate, any approach tending to secure a United Nations intervention in the Vietnam situation is also inappropriate, because such approaches are basically at variance with the 1954 Geneva agreements on Vietnam." *(91st Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam, Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1969), pp. 236-37.)*

18 April-- Hsinhua (New China) news agency reports that the "Chinese Government holds that no consideration can be given to the British Government's request for reconsideration on the matter of Britain sending a special representative to contact China on the problems of Viet Nam and Indo-China. This is stated in a note of the Chinese Foreign Ministry in reply to the British Government today..." The Chinese reply also says that the "British Government's attitude on the Viet Nam problem, far from helping to solve the problem, inflates the arrogance of the US aggressors. Consequently, the request made in the latest note of the British Government cannot be given consideration." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs--Vietnam, no. 2 of 1965 (Canberra: GPO), p. 40.)*

18 April-- Pravda publishes the text of a joint Soviet-DRV communique issued after the visit to the USSR from 10-17 April of a delegation from North Vietnam headed by Lao Dong First Secretary Le Duan. The communique states:

"If the United States aggression against the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam is intensified, the Soviet Government, in case of necessity, given an appeal by the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, will consent to the departure for Viet Nam of Soviet citizens who, guided by the sentiment of proletarian internationalism, express a desire to fight for the just cause of the Vietnamese people, for the maintenance of the socialist achievements of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam.

Having discussed the situation in South Viet Nam, the CPSU Central Committee, the Soviet Government and the Central Committee of the Vietnamese Workers' Party and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam consider that the National Front of Liberation is the genuine exponent of the will and aspirations of the people of South Viet Nam, its only legitimate representative...

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[The two sides]...expressed their evaluation of the recent statement made by the United States President in connection with the situation in Viet Nam. This statement shows that the United States is still keeping a course for the extension of the acts of aggression against the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, for the further spreading of the war against the people of South Viet Nam and does not seek to explore avenues leading to a peaceful solution of the Vietnamese problem.

It is significant that the statement by the United States President on a so-called peaceful settlement has been made at a time when further bombings of the territory of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam are taking place, when there are further movements of American military units and weapons to South Viet Nam to step up the bloody aggression against the people of South Viet Nam--and these aggressive actions continue.

The Soviet Union and the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam agree that a solution of the Vietnamese problem calls for an immediate end to the aggressive actions by the United States against the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam; in conformity with the Geneva Agreements the Government of the United States must evacuate its forces, servicemen and arms from South Viet Nam, put an end to the aggression against South Viet Nam and the infringement of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam.

In the period before the peaceful reunification of Viet Nam it is necessary, according to the Geneva Agreements, that the two parts of Viet Nam have no military alliances with other countries, have no foreign military bases and servicemen on their territory.

The affairs of South Viet Nam must be settled by itself on the basis of the programme of the National Liberation Front.

The peaceful reunification of Viet Nam must be effected by the Vietnamese people themselves without outside intervention.

There also was an exchange of opinion on questions pertaining to the situation in Laos and Cambodia in

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connection with the ceaseless United States intervention in the affairs of those countries. A realistic way to a solution of these problems is scrupulous compliance with the Geneva Agreements of 1954 and 1962. For these purposes it would be useful to convene the relevant international conferences.

Examining the questions of measures to strengthen the defence potential of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, the Party and Government delegations of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the USSR noted with satisfaction that the earlier understanding on these questions is being implemented to the envisaged extent and procedure.

The CPSU Central Committee, the Soviet Government and the Central Committee of the Vietnamese Workers' Party, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam reached an understanding on further steps designed to safeguard the security and defend the sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam which is an objective of aggressive actions by American imperialism and agreed on appropriate measures for these purposes. The Soviet Union reaffirmed its readiness to continue rendering the necessary assistance to the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam for the repulsion of the United States aggression.

The Party and Government delegations of the USSR and the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam emphasized that in conditions of activization of the imperialist forces and their attempts to suppress the liberation movement of the peoples, unity of action and strengthening of the solidarity of the socialist countries...is more necessary than ever before...

The continuation and extension of the American aggression in Viet Nam is a provocation not only against one socialist country--the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam--but also against all socialist countries." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs--Vietnam, no. 2 of 1965 (Canberra: GPO), pp. 41-43.)*

19 April-- During this period, the Soviets begin asserting in increasingly direct terms the primacy of the NLF in South Vietnamese affairs. Radio Moscow broadcasts: "The NLFSV has already obtained wide international recognition. It has permanent representation in the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, China, Cuba, Indonesia, and other countries. Everything goes to show that the NLF is obviously a real expression of the will

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and desires of the people of South Vietnam, its only legitimate representative." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 343.)*

20 April-- The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of Communist China passes a resolution solemnly declaring "that China will continue to do everything in its power to give resolute and unreserved support to the Vietnamese people in their patriotic and just struggle to resist US aggression... The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China holds that this four-point proposition put forward by the National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam is wholly reasonable and that it is the only correct road to the solution of the Vietnamese problem... In accordance with the requests of the Vietnamese people and with the needs of the joint struggle against US imperialist aggression, the Chinese people have done and will continue to do their utmost to assist the Vietnamese people to defeat the US aggressors completely. The Chinese people have always been infinitely loyal in fulfilling their proletarian internationalist obligations, they have never spared any sacrifice whatever in this respect, and they always mean what they say...The aggression which US imperialism is committing against Viet Nam is an important step in its counter-revolutionary global strategy. The Vietnamese people's heroic resistance to this aggression is an important part of the common struggle of the people of the whole world against US imperialism and in defence of world peace. As President Ho Chi Minh said, 'Our country is an outpost of the socialist camp and of the peoples of the world engaged in the struggle against imperialism, colonialism and neocolonialism. To us, this is a great honour'...The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress calls on the people's organizations and the people throughout the country...to make full preparations to send our own people to fight together with the Vietnamese people and drive out the US aggressors in the event that US imperialism continues to escalate its war of aggression and the Vietnamese people need them..." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs--Vietnam, no. 2 of 1965 (Canberra: GPO), pp. 44-45.)*

20-22 April-- On 20 April, the DRV issues a statement which refers to the "Belgrade Peace Appeal" of 17 nonaligned countries made on 15 March. It declares that "[a]ny approach contrary to the stand expounded in the four points laid down by Premier Pham Van Dong in his 8th April report at the Viet Nam National Assembly session is

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inappropriate, any approach tending to secure a UN intervention in the Viet Nam situation is also inappropriate, because such approaches are basically at variance with the 1954 Geneva Agreement on Viet Nam...It is clear that at the present time any solution to the South Viet Nam issue without the decisive voice of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation is impractical...If this basis [the DRV four points] is recognized, favourable conditions will be created for the peaceful settlement of the Viet Nam problem and it will be possible to consider the reconvening of an international conference along the pattern of the 1954 Geneva Conference on Viet Nam." Two days later, the Chinese issue a similar though stronger statement condemning the signatories for playing into the hands of the "US imperialists" and giving them a pretext to further escalate the war. *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs--Vietnam, no. 2 of 1965 (Canberra: GPO), pp. 45-46; "Peking Peoples' Daily Editorial on the 17-Nation Appeal", in Ibid., pp. 46-47.)*

24 April-- India's President Radhakrishnan expresses some tentative ideas (not formal proposals) for ending the hostilities in Vietnam. In essence, these ideas suggest: (a) A cease-fire on both sides and an end to infiltration from North Viet Nam; (b) The frontier between North and South to be policed by an Afro-Asian force. *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs--Vietnam, no. 2 of 1965 (Canberra: GPO), p. 48.)*

26-28 April-- Secretary McNamara tells a news conference that there is "no military requirement for the use of nuclear weapons in the current situation." He notes, however, that the North Vietnamese infiltration of arms and men into South Vietnam has become "progressively more flagrant and more constrained." He says this indicates a growing Viet Cong dependence on the DRV. He also states that the "great bulk" of VC weapons are coming from foreign sources, the larger pieces being "mainly Chinese". On 28 April, the Soviet newspaper Izvestia denounces President Johnson and Secretary McNamara for having "refused to rule out the use of nuclear weapons" in Southeast Asia. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), pp. 157.)*

27 April-- The New York Times reports that China has persuaded Prince Norodom Sihanouk to oppose any international conference that could also be used as a forum to discuss a settlement of the Vietnam conflict. The Cambodian

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decision was apparently made after a meeting between Chou En-lai and Sihanouk in Djakarta, Indonesia the previous week. The Times reports that the Chinese decision has apparently brought the People's Republic into conflict with North Vietnam on this issue (see 18 April DRV-USSR communique). The Times notes that following the visit of the DRV delegation to Moscow, that group left for Peking. It then left Peking for Hanoi without issuing the usual joint communique with China. This is interpreted as a reliable indicator that disagreements had occurred. (New York Times, 27 April 1965, p. 13.)

27 April-- Acting Foreign Minister V. V. Kuznetsov indicates that the recent opposition of Prince Sihanouk to the convening of a conference on Cambodia has created a new situation that has to be studied carefully. This expression of Soviet hesitation comes one day after Britain formally endorsed an earlier Soviet proposal on such a meeting and two days after the United States had expressed interest in it. This timing also coincides with a Chinese denunciation of the USSR for collaborating with the US to defeat the Viet Cong. Apparently this denunciation is aimed at dissuading North Vietnam from accepting any Soviet peace-talk proposal. (New York Times, 28 April 1965, pp. 1 and 14.)

29 April-- Chinese Premier Chou En-lai officially confirms his Government's opposition to any international conference on Cambodia that could be used as a forum for discussing a settlement of the Vietnam conflict. He states that Communist China fully supports Prince Sihanouk's stand that such a gathering could only discuss the question of guaranteeing Cambodia's neutrality and territorial integrity. Chou also declares that at any international conference on Indochina, only the National Liberation Front could represent South Vietnam. (New York Times, 30 April 1965, p. 7.)

29 April-- At the conclusion of three days of talks in Paris between Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko and French Foreign Minister Couve de Murville, a joint statement is issued urging that the 1954 and 1962 Geneva Agreements be implemented to reaffirm the independence of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. The statement says that the "situation in the Indo-Chinese Peninsula, and in particular Viet Nam...creates dangers for peace." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), pp. 157-58.)*

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May-July-- Reflecting on this season in testimony before the House Committee on Appropriations in January 1966, Secretary McNamara states that in the winter of 1964-1965 "we had evidence that the North Vietnamese were infiltrating larger numbers of personnel and were recruiting even larger numbers of personnel in South Vietnam...but those expanded forces had not yet been committed to combat. However, we assumed they would be committed at some time favorable to the Vietcong. We estimated that this would occur shortly after the start of the monsoon season which normally begins about May 1. That estimate proved accurate. They did substantially increase their rate of activity at the start of the monsoon season...And it became very apparent that the force buildup and the increased activity were associated with an objective of cutting the country in half during the monsoon period and of defeating the South Vietnamese forces during that period and of completing the subversion of the South Vietnamese political institutions during that period. It became necessary in order to prevent that to introduce very rapidly large numbers of U.S. combat troops. This we did...I think with hindsight that this decision has proved to be correct because the introduction of U.S. troops did permit the defeat of the Vietcong monsoon offensive." *(89th Cong 2d Sess, Supplemental Defense Appropriations for 1966, Hearings before the Subcommittees of the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives (Washington: GPO, 1966), pp. 28-29.)*

3 May-- Cambodia breaks off diplomatic relations with the United States. Prince Sihanouk explains that this measure is taken because of an attack on two Cambodian villages on 28 April by VNAF aircraft and because of a Newsweek article criticizing Sihanouk's mother. He adds that "Diplomatic relations may be restored...if the United States conducts itself correctly towards Cambodia." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 158.)*

5 May-- Phoumi Vongvichit, Secretary-General of the Neo Lao Hak Xat, lays down four conditions for the United States as the "only solution" to the Laotian problem. The North Vietnamese press agency reports these conditions as being: the stopping of American bombing of Laos; the withdrawal of all US troops, military equipment and war materials; the dismantling of all military bases and organizations; and the "correct" implementation of the 1962 Geneva Agreements. Phoumi also calls upon the right-wing faction of the coalition government to attend tripartite talks in "good faith". *(New York Times, 6 May 1965, p. 16.)*

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9 May-- An "Observer" article in Peking's Jenmin Jih Pao is addressed to India's proposal of 24 April: "On 24th April, Indian President Radhakrishnan put forward a 'new proposal' for the solution of the Viet Nam question. The proposal is unique in that its main content calls for the 'cessation of hostilities in both parts of Viet Nam' and the establishment of an 'Afro-Asian force' to be sent to Viet Nam to 'police' and 'maintain' the so-called 'boundaries'. These, the Indian President said, 'may be thought as necessary steps for the restoration of peace and stability in this area'...The Indian President's 'new proposal', taking 'cessation of hostilities in both parts of Viet Nam' as its starting point, is preposterous in the extreme...The 'new proposal' of the Indian Government is clearly a new plot to use the Asian and African countries to serve US aggression against Viet Nam. This 'new proposal' is silent on US imperialism's crime of aggression and its violation of the Geneva Agreements, and nowhere does it mention the independence, sovereignty, reunification and territorial integrity of Viet Nam. Instead it talks absurdly about cessation of hostilities in the southern and northern parts of Viet Nam. This is deliberately designed to absolve the United States of its crime of aggression and undermine the Vietnamese people's struggle against US aggression and for national salvation ...[T]he Indian Government is obsessively interested in introducing foreign troops into Viet Nam to 'police' and 'maintain' the so-called 'boundaries' between the two parts of Viet Nam. Isn't this, in essence, helping the US aggressors to occupy South Viet Nam and perpetuate the division of Viet Nam?...The root cause of this state of affairs is that the Indian representative, the Chairman of the International Commission has never done anything to check US crimes violating and sabotaging the Geneva Agreements and extending the war in Viet Nam; instead it has shielded and connived at these US crimes in every possible way." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs--Vietnam, no. 2 of 1965 (Canberra: GPO), p. 55.)*

13-18 May-- Secretary Rusk refers to the bombing pause which has occurred in May 1965 in an interview with Professor Henry F. Graff in February 1966. He states that an effort had been made to begin peace talks with Hanoi. He states that "[b]y the third day [of the pause] we had the answers." Peking said "no" on the radio, and Hanoi refused to receive a message from the United States. He says that Gromyko subsequently told him in Vienna that the pause and the message were an "insult". *(Henry F. Graff, "Teach-In on Vietnam By...The President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of State", The New York Times Magazine, 20 March 1966.)*

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13-18 May-- Joseph Kraft, writing in the Washington Post, 5 January 1966, reports on the North Vietnamese response to a secret letter from the US in connection with the May bombing pause. He says that "[Mai Van Bo, North Vietnamese diplomat in Paris] called particular attention to a phrase that indicated that if the four points were recognized as a basis, 'favorable conditions will be created for a peaceful settlement of the Vietnam problem.' He then said that if the four points, including withdrawal of American troops and self-determination for South Vietnam, were accepted in principle, the application of the principle might be delayed over a very long time." *(Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs, Mission to Hanoi (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), p. 305.)*

14 May-- In a major article published in the May issue of the Party journal Red Flag, Lo Jui-ch'ing, Chief of the General Staff of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), refers to Vietnam's "need" of Chinese troops as one condition for direct CPR intervention in the war. However, Lo adds: "Our opposition to U.S. imperialism has always been clear-cut. Our principle is: We will not attack unless we are attacked; if we are attacked, we will certainly counter-attack." Where previously a direct Chinese commitment was dependent upon a Vietnamese request and "the needs of the common struggle" against the United States, the CPR, through Lo Jui-ch'ing, had now apparently retreated considerably with the unequivocal statement that it would have to be attacked before it would act overtly. *(Jenmin Jih Pao, 14 May 1965.)*

15 May-- The Soviets note that "[o]n 29th April, the Australian Government announced its decision to send an infantry battalion to South Viet Nam to take part in the aggressive war which the United States of America is conducting in Viet Nam...Thus Australia is setting out on the path of direct and unprovoked aggression against the Vietnamese people...[in] violation of the most important principles of international law and of the Geneva Agreements of 1954 on Viet Nam...The DRV Government in its statement of 1st May this year sharply condemned this step by the Australian Government and expressed its energetic protest." The Soviet Government fully supports this statement and "considers it its duty to draw the attention of the Australian Government to the fact that, in carrying out the above-mentioned policy in relation to Viet Nam and in setting out on the path of direct aggression against the Vietnamese people, the Australian Government is assuming a serious responsibility for the consequences of its actions." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs--Vietnam, no. 2 of 1965 (Canberra: GPO), pp. 57-58.)*

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18 May-- The North Vietnamese authorities take note of the halt in the American bombing attacks of the North: "According to various sources, the US Government has informed a number of other governments that air raids against the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam are to be suspended from noon (Washington time), 12th May, 1965, till the following week, and that the United States is ready to resume the raids if US and puppet troops are subjected to further attacks in South Viet Nam...In making this perfidious allegation, the US aggressors have no other aim than to cover up their extremely dangerous acts in intensifying the war in Viet Nam and South-East Asia, and at the same time deceive world public opinion on the so-called US 'peace will'...The South Vietnamese people, like any other people, have full right to take up arms against the US aggressors and their henchmen...[T]he US Government's trick in the so-called suspension of air raids against North Viet Nam [is]...a deceitful manoeuvre designed to pave the way for new US acts of war...The Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam affirms once again that the 4-point stand made public on 8th April, 1965, is the only sound basis for a political settlement of the Viet Nam problem..." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs--Vietnam, no. 2 of 1965 (Canberra: GPO), pp. 58-59.)*

18 May-- Jean Lacouture, in his Vietnam: Between Two Truces, reveals with regard to the May bombing pause that a "Hanoi representative in an uncommitted capital announced that Dong's four points were not 'prior conditions' but general principles which, if accepted, would make the search for a settlement possible. A few hours later, however, the bombings were resumed before the White House had been advised of the North Vietnamese diplomat's gesture." *(Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs, Mission to Hanoi (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), p. 305.)*

26 May-- Secretary Rusk tells a news conference that two or more Soviet antiaircraft missile sites may be under construction in North Vietnam. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 159.)*

29 May-- Asked by a French correspondent whether the Vietnamese could defeat the US by themselves, Vice Premier Chen Yi declares: "Yes, I think the Vietnamese people are perfectly capable, by relying on their own forces, to drive the American aggressors out of their territory." *(Jenmin Jih Pao, 4 June 1965.)*

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June-- The Soviet-dominated international journal World Marxist Review discusses the significance of the worldwide protest movement against US actions in Vietnam, the Dominican Republic and elsewhere. It concludes that the "U.S. imperialists are becoming increasingly isolated. Few even of their most loyal allies dare give wholehearted support to the 'dirty war' in Vietnam." *(J. Gibbons, "Solidarity with the People of Vietnam", World Marxist Review, VIII, no. 6 (June 1965), p. 8.)*

1 June-- People's Daily warns that US air strikes in Vietnam "threaten China's security in an increasingly serious manner" and that China and the DRV are "all the more entitled" to assist the Viet Cong: "Since the US aggressors are bombing North Viet Nam round the clock, then the provisional military demarcation line at the 17th Parallel no longer exists and the people of North Viet Nam have no further restrictions whatsoever in assisting their compatriots in the South." The article also charges that the United States has "made a farce of the boundaries between Laos, Viet Nam and Thailand" by "turning this entire nation into one battleground where it moves as it wishes." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 159; Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs--Vietnam, no. 2 of 1965 (Canberra: GPO), pp. 61-62.)*

1 June-- The Australian Government, in reply to the Soviet note of 15 May, states that it regrets that Moscow's message "is based on a distortion of the situation in Viet Nam. The 'direct and unprovoked aggression against the Vietnamese people' to which the Soviet statement refers in fact emanates from Hanoi, through its control and direction of the Viet Cong in South Viet Nam. In 1962, the International Control Commission in Viet Nam found that North Viet Nam had violated Articles 10, 19, 24 and 27 of the 1954 Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in Viet Nam. Further irrefutable evidence of continuing North Vietnamese violations on an increasing scale, including the presence in South Viet Nam of units of North Vietnamese regular army, has since been accumulated and must be known to the Soviet Government...The Soviet Government expressed the view in its statement that the Australian Government assumed 'a serious responsibility for the consequences of its actions' in giving military assistance to South Viet Nam. The Australian Government's decision was taken after the most careful consideration and in the conviction that there was no other way, as long as North Viet Nam and its supporters refuse to

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live in peace with neighbouring countries to defend the freedom and independence of the people of South Viet Nam, and indeed of other countries in South-East Asia whose independence would be threatened if aggression against South Viet Nam were allowed to succeed." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 2 of 1965 (Canberra: GPO), pp. 62-64.)*

9-11 June-- The New China news agency reports that the National Liberation Front has charged President Johnson's "declaration to put Viet Nam and its adjacent waters in the combat zone of the United States armed forces and to order the expeditionary forces to take a direct part in the fight...blatantly violates the 1954 Geneva Agreement on Viet Nam." The news agency states that the NFL is now entitled "to call for volunteers from the armies of North Viet Nam and other friendly countries to join in the fight against the United States aggression." On the following day, the DRV is reported to have urged its people to "expand the movement of volunteering by joining the army and taking a direct part in destroying the enemy and saving the country." On 11 June, Peking's People's Daily warns that Communist China and "all other friendly countries reserve their rights to send volunteers of their armies...if necessary to participate in the war against United States imperialists." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 160.)*

17 June-- When asked about negotiations with the Viet Cong, President Johnson replies that if the VC "had a viewpoint to present and were anxious to negotiate they would have no difficulty finding the government to negotiate." But he adds: "I don't believe we'd ever agree to someone negotiating that is not a government. I am not aware of any government the Viet Cong has." He recalls that the North Vietnamese were not interested in negotiating through the United Nations last August. He furthermore suggests that the Viet Cong would have no difficulty negotiating with the United States "since they are controlled, directed, and masterminded from North Viet-Nam..." Recalling the beginning of the air attacks against North Vietnam, President Johnson states: "In February, we started the program of trying to curtail their ammunition supply and trying to eliminate their bridges and make it more difficult for them to come in, and attempting to convince them we were there to keep

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our commitment and we were going to keep it although they believed from some things said in word and writing, we might not. We attempted to convince them." An unnamed American, who has had conversations with North Vietnamese officials, has reported that "they are not now interested in any negotiation of any kind." Asked about the constitutional authority for US action in Vietnam, the President says that "the authority of the President is very clear and unquestioned without a resolution." He had asked for the Congressional resolution, however, because he wanted to get the support of Congress. *(Public Papers of the Presidents, Lyndon B. Johnson, 1965 (Washington: GPO, 1966), vol 2, pp. 676-77, 680.)*

18 June-- The Chinese Communist Foreign Ministry issues a statement noting that "[w]e have made all preparations, and when we receive the call of the Vietnamese people, we will promptly send our volunteers to Viet Nam to fight shoulder to shoulder with the Vietnamese armed forces and people until the US aggressors are driven out of Viet Nam." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 2 of 1965 (Canberra: GPO), p. 66.)*

20 June-- Ho Chi Minh is interviewed by Pravda correspondent Yuri Zhukov. He reconfirms the 4-point plan of 8 April as the basic Hanoi negotiating position and notes that the "U.S. imperialists have become more and more isolated and met with increasingly sterner condemnation in the world and right in the United States." He declares that support from the USSR, China, the other socialist countries and other peace-loving peoples, including the American people, is "an important factor contributing to the victory of the Vietnamese people's patriotic struggle and the national-liberation movement in the world." *(Ho Chi Minh, "Interview Granted to Yuri Yukov [sic] Pravda Correspondent", Against U.S. Aggression, For National Salvation (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1967), pp. 74-76.)*

21-22 June-- On 22 June, an official "Observer" article in Peking's Jenmin Jih Pao is addressed to efforts of British Prime Minister Harold Wilson to form a Commonwealth Mission to bring about a peace settlement in Vietnam. "Observer" states:

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"On 17th June, a so-called Peace-Bid Mission on Viet Nam was inaugurated in London. Usurping the name of the British Commonwealth, the mission was engineered exclusively by British PM Harold Wilson himself...This is another service rendered by the British Labour Government to the United States on the Viet Nam Question...

In a speech in Oxford, the day before the publication of the communique, British Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart, revealed all the secrets of the proposal of the Labour Government. He put forth this proposal.

First of all, a conference should be held under 'whatever auspices'. A cease fire should be realized before or at the conference. Then, an agreement should be reached to assure that South Viet Nam will be 'a country which is tied to no military alliance'.

The form - A holding of a conference.

The method - the realization of a cease-fire, and

The aim - to turn South Viet Nam into a 'country'.

These are the basic contents of the so-called 'Peace proposal' of the British Labour Government...

The so-called Peace Bid Mission on Viet Nam, organized by the British Labour Government is a continuation of its consistent effort to serve the United States by running around to sell Johnson's peace fraud...

So far as China is concerned, our door was slammed in the face of Gordon Walker. Now, the Wilson Government wants to try again, with the so-called Mission. But it too will find the door slammed."

A Hanoi Nhan Dan article of the previous day had been no more complimentary: "In a word, the undertaking is the same as that of Johnson, which is to bring about unconditional negotiations which are in reality negotiations with conditions, namely—the South Vietnamese people must lay down their arms and let the US imperialists continue to occupy South Viet Nam...The SVNLF, the sole

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authentic representative of the South Vietnamese people, must have its decisive voice in the South Viet Nam question. That is the only correct solution to the Viet Nam question as expounded in the four-point stand of the VDR Government and the five-point statement of 22nd March, 1965, of the SVNLF..." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 2 of 1965 (Canberra: GPO), p. 74; Ibid., pp. 74-75.)*

24-25 June-- On 24 June, the USSR refuses to receive a British Commonwealth peace mission seeking to promote negotiations on Vietnam. The following day, China and North Vietnam also refuse to receive the mission. *(Donald S. Zagoria, Vietnam Triangle (New York: Pegasus, 1967), p. 153.)*

27 June-- A statement issued by the NLF reiterates: "All negotiations with the US imperialists at this moment are entirely useless if they still refuse to withdraw from South Viet Nam their troops and all kinds of war materials, both those of their own and those of their satellites, if they still refuse to dismantle all their military bases in South Viet Nam, if the traitors still surrender the South Vietnamese people's sacred rights to independence and democracy to the US imperialists and if the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation—the only genuine representative of the 14,000,000 South Vietnamese people—does not have a decisive say." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 7 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), p. 2.)*

July-- Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin declares that "American imperialism as can be seen, is set on turning Viet Nam into the front line of its struggle against National Liberation Movement. This course has no prospects and, what is the main thing, is extremely dangerous...because it prevents the reduction of international tension and creates an exceptionally serious situation in restoring peace not only in South-East Asia but throughout the world...[I]n widening its aggression the US should understand that in politics as in physics each action produces a corresponding reaction...the Soviet Union and other socialist countries join with the DRV in class solidarity, to extend to the fraternal Vietnamese people all the assistance necessary to repulse aggression ...The Soviet Union declares once again that the 1954

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Geneva Agreements, and they alone, can serve as the basis for normalising the situation in Viet Nam. As a result we completely support the position of the DRV as formulated in the well-known four points made by Pham Van Dong in his statement of 8th April."
(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 7 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), p. 17.)

1 July-- In response to questions posed by the British Communist Daily Worker, Ho Chi Minh states that the "National Front for Liberation is an organization of the patriotic movement, set up by the masses of the people. It is the leader, the organizer of the South Vietnamese people's struggle against United States imperialism to recover national independence. It is the only genuine representative of the South Vietnamese people...We respect the policies of the Front and hold that the two zones must take their respective characteristics into account, understand each other, restore normal relations between them and gradually achieve national reunification...Vietnam is one. The Vietnamese are one people. Our entire people have the duty of opposing foreign aggression and defending the fatherland." In answer to inquiries as to the present relevance of the Geneva Accords, Ho replies: "...the Geneva Agreements are still the basis for the peaceful solution of the war...I think that the most important provisions are: the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Vietnam must be respected; no military base under the control of a foreign state may be established in Vietnam; Vietnam shall not join any military alliance; democratic freedoms must be guaranteed to create favourable conditions for the restoration of normal relations between the North and the South of Vietnam with a view to the reunification of the country...All countries participating in the Geneva Conference, including the United States, must respect these agreements and implement them correctly. A country which is a Co-Chairman of the Geneva conference, like Britain, should all the more respect its obligations and carry them out correctly."
(Ho Chi Minh, "Answers to the British Daily Worker", Against U.S. Aggression, For National Salvation (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1967), pp. 79-80.)

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3 July-- The official Soviet news agency Tass reports that Moscow, in deference to Cambodia's wishes, is not at this time interested in convening an international conference to guarantee that country's neutrality. *(New York Times, 4 July 1965.)*

10 July-- An editorial in Hanoi's Nhan Dan notes that "[s]o far, though almost completely ignored by public opinion, British Prime Minister Wilson still persists in his efforts to peddle his unsaleable peace initiative... He clamored that his peace mission remains in being, that the door to negotiations still remains open, that it is necessary to continue knocking at the doors of the communist countries, and that he will continue his efforts to bring about peace talks on the Viet Nam problem...The unswerving attitude of the DRV toward Wilson's peace mission...has been expounded by President Ho Chi Minh...: Wilson has not correctly carried out his obligations as a co-chairman of the 1954 Geneva conference on Viet Nam. He has tried to support US imperialist aggression in Viet Nam. He cannot engage in peaceful negotiations since he has himself supported the US policy of aggression and expansion of the war... The only correct way to settle the Viet Nam problem is that the United States must put an end to its aggressive war, withdraw all its troops and weapons from South Viet Nam, let the Vietnamese people settle their own affairs by themselves, and that the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation must have its decisive voice in the South Viet Nam problem." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 7 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), pp. 3-4.)*

13 July-- New US air "provocations" in early July—an attack on the DRV industrial city of Nam Dinh on 2 July and an alleged violation of Chinese air space on 11 July over southern Yünnan Province—are described in a Jenmin Jih Pao editorial as "direct military provocations..." The article states: "The Chinese People's Liberation Army now stands ready, in battle array. We will not attack unless we are attacked; if we are attacked, we will certainly counterattack." *(Jenmin Jih Pao, 16 July 1965.)*

13 July-- At the close of a visit to China by a DRV economic delegation headed by Lao Dong Politburo member and Vice-Premier Le Thanh Nghi, a joint communique is issued.

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After a mutual and effusive exchange of praise, this document reveals that "the two parties had an extensive exchange of views in the course of the talks and obtained fruitful results, and an agreement on economic and technical assistance by China to Viet Nam was signed. Under this agreement, China will provide gratuitous aid to Viet Nam in the form of equipment, whole sets of installations and supplies in the national defence and economic fields." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 7 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), pp. 15-16.)*

18 July-- A hardening of the Chinese attitude towards the settlement of the Vietnam conflict may be seen in Peking's revised attitude towards the 1954 Geneva Accords. Whereas the previous year the Accords had been referred to as the "basis" for a restoration of peace, now no mention is made of the possibility of following those arrangements. Chu Teh notes: "The serious situation in Vietnam has been entirely the work of U.S. imperialism. American imperialism is trampling the Geneva Agreements underfoot, continually expanding its aggressive war against Vietnam, and seriously threatening Asian and world peace. The DRV and the NLFSV have long since pointed out that kicking the U.S. aggressors off Vietnamese soil is the only correct path for solving the Vietnam problem. There are no other ways." But while Chu Teh alludes to the DRV and NLF positions on negotiations, in point of fact he expresses a viewpoint possibly at odds with the Vietnamese in one important respect: Whereas the Vietnamese Communists are beginning to hint that a total US withdrawal from Vietnam could be a goal of negotiations, Peking unqualifiedly considers that negotiations take place only after the US has completely departed from Vietnam.* *(Jenmin Jih Pao, 18 July 1965.)*

19 July-- British Prime Minister Harold Wilson makes a parliamentary statement on his efforts to further a negotiated settlement of the Vietnam conflict. He says:

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*It should be mentioned here that during the latter half of 1965 a number of leaks reached the press from official and semi-official sources concerning North Vietnam's supposed willingness to consider American withdrawal a subject, rather than a precondition, for discussion. Once publicized, however, all these reports were promptly denied by North Vietnamese leaders. *See Asian Analyst (January 1966), pp. 6-7.)*

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"...if the South Vietnamese Government and people with their American allies may not be able to impose a settlement on the Viet Cong and the North, equally it is not within the power of the National Liberation Front, with whatever aid they get from North Viet Nam, to bring South Viet Nam and the Americans to their knees...

I hope I carry honorable members opposite with me in the statement that Hanoi is the key to this situation. What I want them to understand is that that key cannot be turned in Moscow. There is no direct line from the West to Moscow through Hanoi—if there were it would have been turned a long time ago. But I assure the right honorable members opposite that there is no possible means for diplomatic approaches in Moscow to the authorities in Hanoi.

The Soviet position is that the Viet Nam situation is one which must be settled between the parties to the fighting, listed by them as the United States and Viet Nam, including of course North Viet Nam and the National Liberation Front, the Viet Cong. The Soviet position is that they are not involved in the fighting and further that they have not been asked by those whom they support and recognize as allies, namely North Viet Nam, to intervene in a mediatory or any other role.

When the Commonwealth Ambassadors went to see Mr. Kosygin about the Commonwealth peace mission, he made these points clear to them and he told our representatives that they should go to Hanoi. So in those circumstances it is quite impossible for the normal workings of diplomacy to get through to Hanoi via Moscow...

Her Majesty's Government strongly take the view—and this was the view of our Commonwealth colleagues and I think of Rt. Hon. Gentleman opposite—that we should be creating the conditions in which Mr. Gromyko and my Rt. Hon. Friend, as Geneva co-chairmen, could convene a conference whether at Geneva or elsewhere, under the aegis of the 1954 Agreement and under their co-chairmanship. This proposal has the support of the United States, and I think it right to remind the House indeed that the United States' Government are ready to accept the 1954 Agreement as a basis for the ultimate solution."

The Prime Minister describes the fruits of his labor: "The outcome of my Hon. Friend's visit was a disappointment, due partly in his view, to a high degree of confidence in North Viet Nam—no doubt reflected in China—that time is on their side, that they are winning, that they have more to gain on the battlefield than in the conference room. I believe that

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this view is tragically wrong and I think that my Hon. Friend's visit and his 16 hours of persistent argument about it may have done something to shake that confidence. I hope it has...There will be no quick or easy victory for anyone, and a refusal to negotiate now will mean an intensification of the war in which, in the end inevitably, after thousands more have lost their lives... the realisation will slowly dawn that peace will come only at the conference table." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 7 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), pp. 18, 20.)*

20 July-- On the anniversary of the 1954 Geneva Agreements, Ho Chi Minh states that those Accords "solemnly recognize the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Vietnam...However, the American imperialists have done their best to sabotage...[their] implementation..." In spite of this, he declares, "the most correct solution to the Vietnamese problem is that the U.S. Government must seriously implement the 1954 Geneva Agreements, recognize the four-point stand put forward by the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the five points clearly stated by the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation." *(Ho Chi Minh, "Appeal on the Anniversary of the Geneva Agreements", Against U.S. Aggression, For National Salvation (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1967), pp. 82, 85.)*

20 July-- A second substantial difference between the Chinese and Vietnamese Communist positions (see entry for 18 July) is crystallized by Jenmin Jih Pao. An editorial analyzing the Geneva model concludes that US actions over the previous eleven years have effectively destroyed the relevance of the Agreements to any future negotiatory situation. "The solemn Geneva Accords," runs the editorial, "have already been consumed by the war flames ignited by American imperialism. All roads to peacefully solving the Vietnam problem have been choked off by the war machine of American imperialism." At another point, the editorial speaks of the US as having "torn the Geneva Agreements to shreds," and insists that, within the framework of the four- and five-point programs of the DRV and NLFSV, the question of a complete US withdrawal must take absolute precedence over all other of the Vietnamese Communists' preconditions. In effect, the Chinese are not only reinterpreting the four- and five-point programs to emphasize the essentiality of a total US withdrawal; they have gone well beyond the Vietnamese position by declaring the Geneva Accords already obsolete—at the very time that the Vietnamese are saying that the Accords have to be returned to if peace is to be restored (see preceding entry). Thus, simultaneous with a move away from verbal entanglement in Vietnam, the Chinese also are acting, by taking a hard line on negotiations no less than

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by augmenting the supply of men and materials to the DRV, to ensure that the war will be prosecuted relentlessly. *(Jenmin Jih Pao (People's Daily), 20 July 1965.)*

21 July-- A report presented to the Presidium of the National Liberation Front notes that recently "US President Johnson repeated again and again the argument that the United States wants only to return to the 1954 Geneva Accords. But US President Johnson lied. It is the Americans who have opposed the Geneva Accords from the beginning and consistently sabotaged these Accords during the past 11 years...The fact that the US aggressors...now want to use these same Accords as an objective of their struggle and as a screen to hide their deceitful tricks proves that they are in a dangerous situation. The power of the struggle of our peoples in both zones and the indignant criticisms of world opinion have prevented them from achieving their aggressive plot and forced them to start at the beginning again...Today, we have had full experience and sufficient material strength. In addition, we have the wholehearted support of the North and the enthusiastic sympathy, encouragement and aid of the world people. Therefore, it is certain that we will surely be able to thwart all ruses and plans of the US aggressors and their henchmen and to fulfill the mission of liberating our beloved native land...The only way out for them is to agree sincerely to apply the Geneva Agreements correctly and to withdraw the US and satellite troops as well as all war means and equipment and all US military bases from the South so that the Vietnamese people may settle themselves the problem of the South. This is an honourable road for them...The 22 March five-point statement of the NFLSV has set forth the adamant stand of all our armed forces and people...We must firmly maintain this steady stand for national salvation resistance. As long as there is the presence of a US aggressor in South Viet Nam, our armed forces will continue to fight till the entire territory of South Viet Nam is no longer downtrodden by the US aggressors' heels..." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 7 (Canberra: GPO, 1966, pp. 21-22.)*

21 July-- In a planeside interview at Andrews AFB, US Secretary of Defense McNamara states: "The situation is serious today...in several respects. It has deteriorated over the past 12 months. Vietcong strength has increased dramatically during that period, primarily as a result of the continuing infiltration of large numbers of soldiers—now regular army personnel from North Vietnam. That increased strength has allowed the Vietcong to expand and intensify their attacks on the political structure of South Vietnam and in particular to increase their campaign of terror against the civil population." Furthermore, he says: "I have heard no reference to three North Vietnamese divisions being in

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or ready to move in South Vietnam. We do know that there are elements of at least one division in South Vietnam today. I don't think we should put too much emphasis on the fact that there are regular troops there today perhaps where a year ago there were not. We need to emphasize and recognize that this attack on the people of Vietnam, an attack on the Government of Vietnam, is directed, supported, controlled by North Vietnam. They have infiltrated tens of thousands of men over the past several years to build up a very heavy force of guerrilla competency inside that country. Recently, it is true, they have been infiltrating regular units there. I think this is a sign of the strain upon their society. They have run out of volunteers, in effect, and they have had to draw upon their regular forces, but the important point to remember is that they have about 165,000 guerrillas in South Vietnam facing no more than 500,000 regular and paramilitary Government forces, and this is quite an unacceptable ratio of antiguerrilla to guerrilla strength." *(89th Cong 2d Sess, Supplemental Defense Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1966, Hearings before the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate (Washington: GPO, 1966), pp. 82-83.)*

28 July-- In a news conference, President Johnson states US goals: "First, we intend to convince the Communists that we cannot be defeated by force of arms or by superior power...Second, once the Communists know, as we know, that a violent solution is impossible, then a peaceful solution is inevitable...We are ready now, as we have always been, to move from the battlefield to the conference table. I have stated publicly and many times, again and again, America's willingness to begin unconditional discussions with any government, at any place, at any time." President Johnson also says that "... the American people ought to understand that there is no quick solution to the problem that we face there." He announces that he has ordered the US Air Mobile Division to Vietnam together with other forces which will raise American fighting strength from 75,000 to 125,000 men almost immediately. Additional forces will be required and they will be sent. This same day, the President sends a letter to UN Secretary-General U Thant which reads: "I have instructed Ambassador Goldberg especially to maintain close contact with you on the situation in Viet Nam. Your efforts in the past to find some way to remove that dispute from the battlefield to the negotiating table are much appreciated and highly valued by my Government. I trust they will be continued...Meanwhile, as I stated publicly last April, the Government of the United States is prepared to enter into negotiations for peaceful settlement without conditions. That remains our policy." The President

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also writes that "we hope that the Members of the United Nations, individually and collectively, will use their influence to bring to the negotiating table all governments involved in an attempt to halt all aggression and evolve a peaceful solution. I continue to hope that the United Nations can, in fact, be effective in this regard." *(Public Papers of the Presidents, Lyndon B. Johnson, 1965 (Washington: GPO, 1966), vol 2, pp. 794-99, 804-05.)*

28 July-14 August-- On 28 July, the Cambodian Government, in a letter to the UN Security Council, charges that South Vietnamese planes have dumped "toxic powder" on Cambodian territory, resulting in loss of life and damage to crops. The letter links this operation to the "chemical warfare" being conducted by American and South Vietnamese forces in Vietnam. On 3 August, the United States denies this charge. After the Cambodian Government renews its complaints, however, the US asks the Security Council on 14 August to request that the Cambodian Government permit an impartial investigation into the issue by a "qualified international body." The US suggests that the World Health Organization or the Red Cross International Committee would be appropriate organizations to carry out such an investigation and report their findings to the Security Council. The Cambodian Government rejects this proposal. *(90th Cong 1st Sess, Submission of the Vietnam Conflict to the United Nations, Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate...on S. Con. Res. 44...S. Res. 180 (Washington: GPO, 1967), p. 194.)*

30 July-- The use of Korea as an analogy to Vietnam had been present in Chinese writings for some time. After the 28 July announcement by President Johnson that 50,000 more American troops will be sent to Vietnam, bringing US ground strength up to about 125,000, this analogy is offered from the standpoint of concern over the meaning of the US troop increase for Chinese security. "Observer" wonders aloud whether Johnson intends that "the 'ground war' will be expanded without limit? People can still remember clearly how the U.S. war of aggression in Korea was expanded. The Johnson Administration is taking that same old road." *(Jenmin Jih Pao, (People's Daily), 30 July 1965.)*

30 July-- A Chinese Jenmin Jih Pao editorial asserts that the United States is "making vigorous efforts to integrate South Vietnam and Laos into one theater of war in an attempt to reverse its defeat in Vietnam and realize its plan of a wider war in Indochina." It warns: "If the United States aggressors put this plan into effect, they would be breaking down the boundary limits of Vietnam, Laos and Thailand. In that case it would no longer be a Vietnam war, a Laotian war, or a war limited to Indochina even." *(New York Times, 31 July 1965, p. 3.)*

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30 July-- In answer to questions posed by the Cuban newspapers Hoy and Revolucion, Ho Chi Minh declares that "South Vietnam will surely be liberated. South Vietnam will be independent, democratic, peaceful and neutral in accordance with the programme of the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation. The two zones North and South will achieve national reunification step by step without any foreign interference." *(Ho Chi Minh, "Answers to the Cuban Hoy and Revolucion", Against U.S. Aggression, For National Salvation (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1967), p. 90.)*

August-- French correspondent Michel Vincent, writing in the Soviet-oriented journal World Marxist Review, discusses his recent trip to North Vietnam. Commenting on the US bombing attacks, he states: "I do not think it would be any exaggeration, therefore, to say that this phase of the aggression has been a failure. The tone of some of Johnson's recent statements is a tacit admission of this fact...True, there are demolished bridges, damaged highways and wrecked buildings, including many schools and hospitals. But what does it all add up to? The inaccuracy of the bombing makes the destruction of the targets extremely costly, and sometimes indeed problematic, considering the speed with which the damage is repaired. What object have the Americans been pursuing? To interfere with transport? To prevent supplies from reaching the Vietcong? But traffic on the roads has not ceased, nor has it been hampered to any great extent. The decisive factor, then, can only be the reaction of the population. Had the inhabitants of the "fourth zone" been intimidated or demoralized by the bombing, the United States might have chalked up a significant victory. But one must have a very scant knowledge of the mentality and history of the Vietnamese people to imagine that they could ever be bludgeoned into submission. The USA, confident of its technical superiority, cannot understand how a relatively small nation could have the temerity to fight back. They do not realize that the entire history of this nation is a record of unequal struggle against powerful enemies..." Moreover, "[s]cattering leaflets urging the population to turn against their government in areas that were the cradle of the Vietnamese revolution is one of the stupidest blunders the 'psychological war' experts have ever made. Thus, on the psychological plane the failure of the U.S. bombings of the DRV is even greater than their attempts to cripple the transport arteries and the economy." Vincent elaborates the Communist version of the "domino theory": "Moreover, the Vietnamese people who are fighting for freedom are in the front line of the struggle against imperialism, and hence their struggle is the concern of all anti-imperialist forces everywhere, of all progressives. To appreciate the implications of this one

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has only to imagine the consequences of an American victory in Vietnam. It would mean the enslavement of the peoples of Indochina and all of Southeast Asia, intensified repressions against the national-liberation movements in Latin America and Africa, and heightened tension in Europe as well." As to the future, US efforts to spread the war are likely to be deterred by the failure of their policies on the battlefield. Moreover, Soviet pledges of stepped-up aid also will inhibit the expansion of aggression. Finally, "there is the factor of world public opinion. Future American policy will be determined increasingly by the degree of the United States' isolation. Should the U.S. succeed in winning sufficient support for its present policy, it will endeavor to extend the conflict, to compensate for its current failure, and world peace will be imperilled. If, on the contrary, it is isolated and pilloried by public opinion it will be forced to recognize the need for negotiations on a realistic basis, i.e., on the basis defined by Pham Van Dong in his report to the National Assembly. For one thing, the United States will have to realize that it cannot impose its conditions on the DRV and that it will have to talk to the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, which it has so far ignored..." *(Michel Vincent, "Vietnam Fights Back", World Marxist Review, VIII, no. 8 (August 1965), pp. 79-81.)*

1 August-- Addressing a reception to mark the 38th anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army (Army Day), Lo Jui-ch'ing Chief of the PLA General Staff, again refers to a "Korea-type war" as well as to the alleged US "threat that 'the idea of sanctuary is dead.'" Observing that in Korea, "we had a test of strength with the American aggressors" which "proved that they are by no means formidable," Lo proceeds to reveal in the clearest terms to date China's anxiety over the possibility of being forced into direct involvement in war with the United States. He says of the Americans: "If they should lose all sense of reality in their lust for power, misjudge the Chinese people's strength and determination, impose a war on them and compel them to accept the challenge, then the Chinese people and the Chinese People's Liberation Army, who have long since made every preparation and who stand ready in battle array, would not only take them on till the very end but would invite them to come in large numbers." A leading Government and army figure thus, for the first time, links the possibility of a large-scale ground war in Vietnam to the Korean experience—an American miscalculation of Chinese resolve, security interests, and military preparedness. Quite unlike the Korean case, however, the tone of menacing counteraction is absent, replaced by an air of defensiveness geared to the apparent hope that a conflict with the US can be avoided. *(Jenmin Jih Pao (People's Daily), 6 August 1965).*

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1 August-- At the conclusion of an official visit to Yugoslavia, Indian Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri and Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito issue a joint communique which notes: "The two sides devoted considerable attention during their talks to the deteriorating situation in Viet Nam and exchanged views on how the dangerous drift towards war could be avoided. If a dangerous and wider war in Viet Nam is to be averted and world peace is to be preserved, there is no alternative to a political solution within the framework of the Geneva Agreements which the two sides strongly support. For this purpose it is of utmost importance that the parties concerned in the Viet Nam situation meet at a conference table. At any such conference the National Liberation Front of South Viet Nam should take part...There should be a stoppage of bombing of DRVN which would create favourable conditions in which there could be appropriate responses on all sides, leading to a conference. The two countries agreed that they would undertake, together with other non-aligned countries, efforts for finding out a peaceful solution of the Vietnamese problem and for the realization of the aspirations of Vietnamese people for peace and independence." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 7 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), p. 28.)*

1-9 August-- On 1 August, Hanoi's Nhan Dan attacks the Tito-Shastri talks. It reveals: "The circumstances of the Tito-Shastri encounter are also worth mentioning. On 26 July Averell Harriman, special envoy of US President Johnson, arrived in Yugoslavia. According to foreign reports, Harriman conferred with Tito for two days, 27 and 28 July. On 28 July Shastri arrived in Yugoslavia and talked with Tito for two days ending 30 July. The next day Harriman again talked with Tito for the second time. The arrangement was elaborate indeed...People do not yet fully know the content of the talks, nor the plan worked out by Tito and Shastri on the Viet Nam question. But it is known to everyone that they have wholeheartedly advertised and peddled Johnson's unconditional discussions merchandise, pleaded for the US imperialists' acts of war intensification and expansion, attempted to deceive the world people, and, by means of pressure, to force the Vietnamese people to give up their just struggle against the United States, for national salvation..." On 9 August, the Chinese follow suit in even more vitriolic terms, denouncing the Yugoslav and Indian leaders as faithful servants of US imperialism, whose plan is "nothing new but an offspring of Johnson's 28 July statement..." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 7 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), pp. 38-39.)*

2 August-- The DRV issues a statement attacking President Johnson's announcement that 50,000 additional servicemen will be sent to Vietnam:

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"...The Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam strongly denounces the massive dispatch by the US Government of combat troop reinforcements to South Viet Nam for intensified aggression and expanded war in Viet Nam, which constitutes an extremely serious encroachment upon the Vietnamese people's national rights, and brings about a highly dangerous situation in Indo-China and South-East Asia. The Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam once again exposes the US authorities' deception of 'unconditional discussions', which in essence is a perfidious manoeuvre to impose by force on the Vietnamese people submission to the US policy of aggression.

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam solemnly declares that Viet Nam is one, the Vietnamese people are one, the US imperialists having encroached on Vietnamese territory; every Vietnamese is duty-bound to fight against the US aggressors, for national salvation...Even if the US imperialists send in 100,000 or 200,000 or more American troops, even if the struggle is to last 10, 20 years or more, the Vietnamese people are determined to fight until final victory...

US President Johnson speaks about an 'honourable peace'. It must be recalled that for the past 11 years, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam has repeatedly put forward reasonable and sensible proposals to achieve a peaceful settlement of the Viet Nam problem on the basis of the 1954 Geneva Agreements...

For the US Government, there is only one way to an 'honourable peace', that is, to correctly implement the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Viet Nam, and accept the four-point stand of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. The US Government must stop at once its air war against the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, and completely cease all encroachments on the sovereignty and security of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. It must put an immediate end to the aggressive war in South Viet Nam, withdraw all US troops and weapons from there, and let the South Viet Nam people themselves settle their own affairs in accordance with the programme of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation, the only genuine representatives of the South Viet Nam people. There is no other way, not even by resorting to UN intervention in Viet Nam..." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 7 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), pp. 31-32.)*

3 August-- In response to the American troop increase, Peking issues an uncompromising reply: "...Every time the Johnson administration beats the drum for war it plays the 'peace'

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accompaniment to cover up its adventurous act of widening the war and to induce the American people to offer money and lives; it also instructs political touts to peddle its peace swindle...In the same statement in which he [President Johnson] hypocritically urged the United Nations to employ 'all its resources' to 'bring peace', he threatened to let 'death and desolation' lead the way to the conference table...Does this not mean that the United States is intent on intensifying the fighting in the south and the bombing of the north...The United States will not lay down its butcher knife...any begging or any wish for something good to turn up will only feed its ferocity. The only correct way is to do to the United States what it does to us: To wage a tit-for-tat struggle against it. Only by smashing the Johnson administration's adventurous plan for expanding the war in the course of its escalation can peace in Viet Nam and Indo-China be restored." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 7 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), p. 32.)*

4 August-- Secretary McNamara and General Wheeler appear before the Senate Subcommittee on Defense Appropriations. In his prepared statement, Secretary McNamara says: "What is at stake...is the ability of the free world to block Communist armed aggression and prevent the loss of all of Southeast Asia, a loss which in its ultimate consequences could drastically alter the strategic situation in Asia and the Pacific to the grave detriment of our own security and that of our allies...The covert nature of this aggression, which characterized the earlier years of the struggle in South Vietnam, has now all but been stripped away. The control of the Vietcong effort by the regime in Hanoi, supported and incited by Communist China, has become increasingly apparent." Secretary McNamara points out that the Soviet Union and China have different rationales concerning the use of force for extending Communism and that the Communist Chinese have a "more militant stance" and greater hatred for the free world. He continues: "It is clear, therefore, that a Communist success in South Vietnam would be taken as positive proof that the Chinese Communists' position is correct and they will have made a giant step forward in their efforts to seize control of the world Communist movement. Furthermore, such a success would greatly increase the prestige of Communist China among the nonaligned nations and strengthen the position of their followers everywhere." He states that it is essential to understand that "the so-called insurgency there is planned, directed, controlled, and supported from Hanoi. True, there is a small dissident minority in South Vietnam, but the Government could cope with it if it were not directed and supplied from the outside."

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Secretary McNamara reports that through 1963 the bulk of the arms infiltrated from the North were old French and American models acquired prior to 1954 in Indochina and Korea but that the current flow of weapons from the DRV consists almost entirely of the latest arms acquired from China. Likewise through 1963 nearly all of the personnel infiltrated through Laos were former southerners, who had been trained and equipped in the North. In the last 18 months, however, the great majority of infiltrators—more than 10,000 of them—have been ethnic North Vietnamese, mostly draftees ordered into the People's Army of Vietnam for duty in the South. In addition, McNamara says: "...[I]t now appears that, starting their journey through Laos last December, from one to three regiments of a North Vietnamese regular division, the 325th Division of the North Vietnamese Army, have deployed into the central highlands of South Vietnam for combat alongside the Vietcong." The Secretary of Defense had earlier predicted that a Communist offensive would probably begin after the start of the monsoon season. He outlines the current threat: "It is now clear that these forces are being committed in increasing numbers and that the Communists have decided to make an all-out attempt to bring down the Government of South Vietnam. The entire economic and social structure is under attack. Bridges, railroads, and highways are being destroyed and interdicted. Agricultural products are being barred from the cities. Electric power—plants and communication lines are being sabotaged. Whole villages are being burned and their population driven away, increasing the refugee burden on the South Vietnamese Government...The South Vietnamese forces have to defend hundreds of cities, towns and hamlets while the Vietcong are free to choose the time and place of their attack. As a result, the South Vietnamese forces are stretched thin in defensive positions, leaving only a small central reserve for offensive action against the Vietcong, while the latter are left free to concentrate their forces and throw them against selected targets. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Vietcong retains most of the initiative...Presently, the situation is particularly acute in the northern part of the country where the Communists have mobilized large military forces which pose a threat to the entire region and its major cities and towns. Our air attacks may have helped to keep these forces off balance, but the threat remains, and it is very real." Therefore, McNamara explains, Australia and New Zealand have provided combat forces, and the United States will have to increase its combat forces in South Vietnam. He says that tactics but not objectives have changed: "What we are seeking through the planned military buildup is to block the Vietcong offensive, to give the people of South Vietnam and their Armed Forces some relief from the unrelenting Communist pressures—to give them time to strengthen their Government, to reestablish law and order, and to revive

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their economic life which has been seriously disrupted by Vietcong harassment and attack in recent months. We have no illusions that success will be achieved quickly, but we are confident that it will be achieved much more surely by the plan I have outlined." In response to questions, Secretary McNamara states that the war in South Vietnam is an important test of the abilities of Communist China to expand its control, since he believes: "If they succeed here, they will try again elsewhere. When they do try again elsewhere we can either allow them to proceed successfully or we must face them there. If we are forced to face them there it will be more costly than facing them in Vietnam." Speaking about the bombing of North Vietnam, McNamara explains: "Our policy is to direct our operations against the targets directly related to the infiltration of men and equipment into South Vietnam. Those are supply depots, ammunition depots, military barracks, lines of communication, and particularly highways, railroads, and bridges associated with them and the traffic moving along those roads." He describes the goal to be attained by the combined air and ground actions: "We see it as convincing the Vietcong that they can't hope to win in the south and, thereby, forcing them to terminate their attempt to subvert the established government of the south." When asked to assess the effect of air strikes against the North Vietnamese economy, McNamara replies: "We know that rail traffic has stopped for all practical purposes south of Hanoi. We know there have been other effects. But the effects have not been so great as to stop the flow of men and material into the south." Since North Vietnam has a "primarily agricultural" economy, air strikes cannot have decisive economic effects, but they are important for their psychological impact on the North Vietnamese. He notes: "There are over 3,000 enemy aircraft per month flying over there, over their territory. Their people know that their Government can't protect them. Their people hear the bombs dropping and they know that an enemy power is attacking them and they fear the future and they begin to lose confidence in their Government as a result. This political pain is great, very great indeed, and it is being felt by the [North Vietnamese] Government." Secretary McNamara also reveals that the recent attacks against SAM sites No. 6 and No. 7 have been thought to be essential in that the sites would affect attacks on certain military targets. This is the reason that these sites have been attacked.
(89th Cong 1st Sess, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1966, Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, U.S. Senate (Washington: GPO, 1965), pt 2., pp. 761-74, 825-41, 863-66.)

6 August-- The NLF Central Committee issues a statement pointing out that "peace in Indo-China and the south-East Asian region is

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directly and seriously threatened by the introduction by the Americans of increasing numbers of US and satellite troops into South Viet Nam. The NFLSV Central Committee solemnly declares that the South Vietnamese people will sacrifice everything, would rather die than be enslaved, and are determined to wage a resistance war to the end to protect their fatherland, win complete independence, and protect the lives and property of the compatriots. We recall the 22 March statement and stress that any negotiations with the US imperialists at the present time would be useless if they continue sending troops to invade South Viet Nam, if the South Vietnamese people's sovereignty is surrendered to the US imperialists by the country-selling authorities, and if the NFLSV—the sole, genuine representative of the South Vietnamese people—does not have a decisive voice and role...The NFLSV Central Committee once again solemnly asserts that the rock-like, anti-US national salvation stand as expounded in the 22 March 1965 statement is completely correct and that the Viet Nam problem can only be settled on the basis of this stand." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 7 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), p. 35.)*

7 August-- A Peking People's Daily editorial comments that "...Johnson's statement of 28 July also opens a new chapter in US imperialism's manoeuvres for 'peace talks' on Viet Nam. This is the attempt to invoke the United Nations to hatch a new fraud for 'peace talks'. ...He sent a personal letter to U Thant, UN secretary general, and instructed the new US representative at the United Nations, Goldberg, to place the Viet Nam question on the agenda of the Security Council. He prevailed upon American officials and the American propaganda machine to make a fanfare of this manoeuvre. He directed the Tito group of Yugoslavia and the Indian reactionaries to work to this end. It is obvious that all this was carefully thought out...It is, however, clear to everyone that the United Nations has no right whatever to meddle in the Viet Nam question, nor can it solve the issue. The Viet Nam question has nothing to do with the United Nations. The 1954 Geneva agreements were concluded outside of it...What is more, the United Nations under the thumb of the United States has long become an instrument of US aggression...has never ventured to say a word against the US crimes of aggression, yet when called upon by Washington, it has produced one resolution after another to help out the US aggressor...Washington simply cannot pull itself out of the impasse in Viet Nam by taking the Viet Nam question into the United Nations." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 7 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), pp. 35-36.)*

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11 August-- A pact for cultural and scientific cooperation between the Soviet Union and Cambodia is signed. *(New York Times, 12 August 1965, p. 15.)*

20 August-- The DRV armed forces newspaper Quan Doi Nhan Dan comments that "only when the US Government shows concrete manifestations of its recognition of the four-point stand of the DRV Government and the five-point stand of the NFLSV can there be a basis for the peaceful settlement of the war in Viet Nam...At first hearing, people may think that the US imperialists put forward no conditions whereas the Vietnamese people raise certain conditions...The truth is that the Vietnamese people do not put any conditions to the US imperialists. They only demand that the latter strictly implement the provisions of the Geneva agreements which were signed 11 years ago and which the US imperialists undertook to respect. The content of the four-point stand of our government conforms to the main political and military provisions of the 1954 Geneva agreements on Viet Nam...Now the Vietnamese people only demand that the US imperialists return to the 1954 Geneva agreements: they must stop their aggression, withdraw US troops from South Viet Nam, stop air raids on North Viet Nam and let the Vietnamese people settle their internal affairs themselves...One cannot mediate between the US imperialists' stand to carry out aggression to the end and the Vietnamese people's thorough stand to oppose aggression. If anybody wants to stand as mediator without condemning the aggressors and demanding that the latter stop their aggression and without approving and supporting the victims of aggression in their struggle against the aggressors, he can but encourage the aggressors to continue their aggression...the Vietnamese people hold that only by determinedly struggling against the US aggressors can the situation be relaxed." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 7 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), pp. 45-46.)*

31 August-- DRV Premier Pham Van Dong comments that the North serves "as the firm base of the struggle for peaceful reunification of the country..." He declares: "The purpose of the Vietnamese people's whole struggle has been fully embodied in the four-point stand of the DRV Government. This is the sole correct stand of peace which has been recognized by world public opinion as the only basis for a settlement of the Viet Nam problem. This four-point stand fully conforms to the most important political and military provisions of the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Viet Nam, and the whole world is now of the view that these agreements must be correctly implemented. This four-point stand must be solemnly accepted by the US Government before a political settlement of the Viet Nam problem can be contemplated."

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(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 7 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), p. 46.)

September-- An article in the Soviet-oriented international journal World Marxist Review accuses the US of trying to hide its aggression behind a "smokescreen of peace talk" and notes that most members of the UN "do not want this organization to compromise itself by complicity in American aggression, and the U.S. diplomatic moves in the United Nations are not yielding the desired results." It supports the DRV/NLF programs as being the "only constructive and realistic" basis for a peaceful settlement of the Vietnam conflict and notes: "The world situation depends in large measure on the struggle that is at present gaining momentum inside the United States...Thousands are joining the protest movement, but to compel the White House to heed the voice of the people, hundreds of thousands, millions must take action. The more the people of the United States become aware that a substantial part of the country's armed forces is engaged in Vietnam, the heavier the burden that this sanguinary and lawless action lays upon their shoulders will become and the better able they will be to reappraise the policy of the ruling and imperialist circles. This process has already begun." *(M. Stone, "U.S. Imperialists Bogged Down in the 'Dirty War'", World Marxist Review, VIII, no. 8 (August 1965), pp. 88-89.)*

2 September-- Ho Chi Minh, while being interviewed by an East German correspondent, notes that while the Americans talk "about peace, they urgently build new military bases, send many troop reinforcements to South Viet Nam, and intensify the bombing and straffing raids on North Viet Nam. Their peace negotiations trick definitely cannot fool the peoples of Viet Nam and the world. As has been stated on many occasions by the DRV Government, the most correct solution to the Viet Nam problem lies in the correct implementation of the 1954 Geneva Agreements by the US Government, and the carrying out by the latter of the four points put forth by the Government of the DRV and the five points announced by the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation (NFLSV). The Vietnamese people cherish peace, but peace cannot be dissociated from national independence. The Vietnamese people know that real independence must be secured if they are to enjoy real peace, and that to fight for national independence is to fight for peace. The Vietnamese people decidedly will not tolerate that the US aggressors sabotage peace, and trample underfoot the independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity..." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 7 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), pp. 49-50.)*

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2 September-- A lengthy Jenmin Jih Pao editorial on the subject of the successful anti-Japanese war is published. Its primary purpose appears to have been to reaffirm, probably for the benefit of China's Vietnamese friends, the often-expressed thesis that a weak power can, like the Chinese against the Japanese, defeat an outwardly superior enemy. Based on the justness of its fight, the favorableness of the terrain, and a reliance on man over weapons (in short, on a correct application of Mao Tse-tung's protracted warfare theories), an initially weak revolutionary force can overcome a stronger enemy riven by internal contradictions. The editorial attacks the Soviet Union for "serving U.S. imperialism" by believing that the strong will always be strong and the weak always weak. It goes on to apply the thesis on the changing balance of forces to particular Chinese foreign policy problems: Taiwan, Indochina, South Korea, and Vietnam. On Vietnam, however, the editorial indicates the immediacy of China's concern, since the Johnson Administration is "publicly shouting its preparedness to fight a large-scale war with China." Conscious of this threat, it exclaims: "The Chinese people cannot sit idly by doing nothing about this serious situation. The Chinese people, having the experience of long-term struggle with imperialism, understand how to deal with new war provocations of U.S. imperialism...If U.S. imperialism stubbornly wants to expand the war onto the heads of the Chinese people, the Chinese people and the Chinese People's Liberation Army will with determination accompany it to the end. The Chinese people are mobilized, organized, armed..." In terms slightly more dramatic than but basically similar to comments expressed a few months previously, the editorial underscores again the anxiety of the People's Republic at the possibility of a direct military confrontation with the United States. *(Jenmin Jih Pao (People's Daily), 2 September 1965.)*

3 September-- Lo Jui-ch'ing, Chief of the General Staff of the People's Liberation Army, speaks before a mass rally in Peking. His address, entitled "The People Defeated Japanese Fascism and They Can Certainly Defeat U.S. Imperialism Too", parallels the Jenmin Jih Pao editorial of the preceding day in its virulent attack on the similar vulnerabilities of American and Japanese imperialism. In addition, Lo strikes hard at the retreatist nature of Soviet revisionism which, with its absurd fear of nuclear war, has been abetting US action against revolutionary struggles, both on the battlefield and equally in America's deceitful appeals for peace talks. He terms Soviet duplicity "a most shameful betrayal of Marxism-Leninism." Once more, however, the crucial passages are reserved for the implications that US "aggression" holds for China. In America's frantic efforts to get out of its hopeless predicament in Vietnam, Lo states, the possibility of an irrational escalation cannot be ruled out: "At present [US imperialism] is accelerating

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the escalation of its war of aggression in Vietnam and keeps on shouting about expanding the war to China. This is simply an expression of desperate recklessness in the face of heavy defeats in Vietnam and other parts of the world. U.S. imperialism, in order to save itself from defeat, may go (is capable of going) mad. On this point, we certainly must have sufficient plans and certainly must complete preparations for U.S. imperialism's spreading the war of aggression against Vietnam and for imposing (forcing) the war on us." Thus, Lo's speech presents to the outside observer a new element in Chinese thinking: the American potential, not previously admitted by Peking, for launching an insane attack on the Chinese nation, an attack for which the Chinese people have to prepare. *(Jenmin Jih Pao (People's Daily), 4 September 1965.)*

3 September-- The day after the 20th anniversary of the Japanese surrender in World War II, Chinese Defense Minister Lin Piao issues a major policy statement which is published in newspapers throughout the country. He uses the victory over Japan as a starting point for an analysis of the basic principles of Mao Tse-tung's people's war doctrine and their relevance for the contemporary world situation. After spelling out the tactics of people's war as they were applied against the Japanese, Lin proceeds to stress the importance of self-reliance on the path to victory. The moral support of other countries, he acknowledges, had been a factor in China's successes against the Japanese and later against the Kuomintang; but in all people's wars, outside assistance necessarily plays a "supplementary role." Each revolutionary movement "is the business of the masses in that country and should be carried out primarily by their own efforts; there is no other way." Like the People's Liberation Army, which "independently waged people's war on a large scale and won great victories without any material aid from outside" from 1937 to 1949, those who would now make revolution have to learn to survive on their own "even when all material aid from outside is cut off." With clear reference to the war in Vietnam, and specifically to the possibility of severe US damage to Sino-Vietnamese lines of communication and supply, Lin stresses: "If one does not operate by one's own efforts, does not independently ponder and solve the problems of the revolution in one's own country and does not rely on the strength of the masses, but leans wholly on foreign aid—even though this be aid from socialist countries which persist in revolution [like China]—no victory can be won, or be consolidated even if it is won." One can interpret this section to mean that Lin, speaking for the Party leadership, is warning the North Vietnamese of China's unhappiness with their conduct of the war, their diplomacy, and their stand on the Sino-Soviet dispute. If so, the Chinese, it can be argued, are saying that Hanoi's failure to revise its strategy, policies, and position

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within the international Communist movement could lead to a delay or stoppage of aid from across the border. But the article also seems to contain certain assurances that the statement on self-reliance should not be taken in this way. Time and again, the Defense Minister attacks Soviet conduct and contrasts it with China's positive attitude toward wars of liberation. Moscow is declared guilty of having seriously harmed the international revolutionary movement by its failure to differentiate and pass through the two requisite stages of revolution—the national-democratic stage and its sequel, socialist revolution. By skipping stages, the Soviets have violated a vital rule of Marxism-Leninism--that protracted armed struggle against imperialism is absolutely necessary before true socialism can be achieved. Thus, the Chinese, adhering to that objective law, recognize the duty of fighting imperialism and assisting those struggling against it. The need for self-reliance does not preclude outside support: "Only when the people in a country are awakened, mobilized, organized and armed can they overthrow the reactionary rule of imperialism and its lackeys through struggle; their role cannot be replaced or taken over by any people from outside. In this sense, revolution cannot be imported. But this does not exclude mutual sympathy and support on the part of revolutionary peoples in their struggle against the imperialists and their lackeys. Our support and aid to other revolutionary peoples serves precisely to help their self-reliant struggle." Thus, far from having delivered a rebuke to North Vietnam or the NLF, Lin Piao had merely made clear, first, that the possible interruption of outside aid should not be allowed to deflate the revolution and, second, that China remains committed to aiding any ongoing revolution such as Vietnam's provided the indigenous revolutionary forces are equal to the task and are capable of victory. Lin describes the struggle in Vietnam as "the most convincing current example" of a people's war, one which clearly illustrates that the "U.S. aggressors are unable to find a way of coping with people's war...They are deeply worried that their defeat in Viet Nam will lead to a chain reaction. They are expanding the war in an attempt to save themselves from defeat. But the more they expand the war, the greater will be the chain reaction. The more they escalate the war, the heavier will be their fall and the more disastrous their defeat. The people in other parts of the world will see still more clearly that US imperialism can be defeated, and that what the Vietnamese people can do, they can do too...History has proved and will go on proving that people's war is the most effective weapon against US imperialism and its lackeys." By its actions, Lin claims, "U.S. imperialism has further weakened itself by occupying so many places in the world, over-reaching itself, stretching its fingers out wide and dispersing its strength, with its rear so far away and its supply

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lines so long. As Comrade Mao Tse-tung has said, "Wherever it commits aggression, it puts a new noose around its neck. It is beseiged ring upon ring by the people of the whole world." Eventually, the growth of people's revolutions throughout the underdeveloped countries will result in the surrounding of the capitalist West, just as within individual states the revolutionaries must first capture the countryside and surround the cities before victory can be won. In this world-wide struggle, it is the duty of the socialist states to make the necessary sacrifices to aid the national liberation movements. China, in fact, is already doing this in Vietnam despite a threat to itself. As Lin puts it: "The U.S. imperialists are now clamouring for another trial of strength with the Chinese people, for another large-scale ground war on the Asian mainland. If they insist on following in the footsteps of the Japanese fascists, well then, they may do so, if they please. The Chinese people definitely have ways of their own for coping with a U.S. imperialist war of aggression. Our methods are no secret. The most important one is still mobilization of the people, reliance on the people, making everyone a soldier and waging a people's war...We want to tell the U.S. imperialists once again that the vast ocean of several hundred million Chinese people in arms will be more than enough to submerge your few million aggressor troops. If you dare to impose war on us, we shall gain freedom of action. It will then not be up to you to decide how the war will be fought...If you want to send troops, go ahead, the more the better. We will annihilate as many as you can send, and can even give you receipts..." As to Western speculation that China might "mellow" with age: "It is sheer day-dreaming for anyone to think that, since our revolution has been victorious, our national construction is forging ahead, our national wealth is increasing and our living conditions are improving, we too will lose our revolutionary fighting, will abandon the cause of world revolution and discard Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism." Taken together, Lin's article, Lo's speech and the previous day's Jenmin Jih Pao editorial, despite differences in emphasis, display certain similar themes: the perception of inherent US weaknesses in seeking to apply admittedly great power to Asian realities; the strong remarks on Soviet capitulationism in the face of the American threat; the conviction in the justifiability and inevitable success of revolutionary movements against US-supported aggressive wars; and the belief that US actions in Vietnam are sufficiently dangerous to China's security to require a deterrent warning of Chinese preparedness. *(Lin Piao "Long Live the Victory of the People's War", Peking Review, X, no. 32 (4 August 1967), pp. 14-35.)*

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3 September-- Peking radio broadcasts an address by Chou En-lai in which the Chinese Premier states that "[i]t is impossible to put the 1954 Geneva Agreements into effect if the United States does not first withdraw its troops from South Viet Nam, which means the question of South Viet Nam is still being subjected to outside interference...The very aim of the peace talks plot hatched by the United States is to bring about negotiations by cajolery, so as to consolidate its position in South Viet Nam... As the whole world knows, the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam has repeatedly pointed out that the United Nations has nothing to do with the Viet Nam question and has no right whatsoever to intervene." Chou restates his Government's support for the 4-point plan of the DRV and the 5-point statement of the NLF. He demands that the US "stop this aggression, withdraw all its military forces from South Viet Nam and leave the South Vietnamese people to settle their own problems." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 7 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), pp. 51-52.)*

6 September-- On this date, The Nation reports statements made by DRV Premier Pham Van Dong and General Nguyen Van Vinh concerning the issues of American withdrawal from Vietnam and the reunification of the country. Pham Van Dong is reported to have said that "[w]e have no desire to rush political reunification. We want the opening up of trade and communications between the North and South and the reunion of the divided families, but political re-unification will result from a slow process of rapprochement between our Government and the new democratic Government in Saigon. This is a matter we shall settle between ourselves, in our time, and without outside interference." General Vinh commented on the attainment of a political solution to the conflict: "For a political solution, and to achieve true peace in South Vietnam, the U.S. imperialists must first of all agree to the withdrawal of their forces. Concerning the way of conducting this withdrawal, the imperialist side has many experiences: the French have withdrawn from Indo-China and Algeria, and the Americans have withdrawn from Laos and other areas in the world." Pham Van Dong added: "The Americans also want to know what they will obtain in return for this withdrawal. Certainly, they will get something. They will, in return, obtain peace, friendship, honor for the U.S.A., and benefit for the American people's interests and lives." *(Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs, Mission to Hanoi (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), pp. 296-97.)*

21 September-- Jenmin Jih Pao continues to express Chinese concern that US imperialism may "impose a war on us..." and threatens to retaliate "from all directions" should this occur. *(Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs, Mission to Hanoi (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), pp. 340-41.)*

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23 September-- The Democratic Republic of Vietnam reaffirms earlier rejections of American offers of peace negotiations, claiming that the US "scheme is to try to achieve at the conference table what it has been unable to gain on the battlefield." It admits that the air strikes in North Vietnam have "disrupted the peaceful labor" of the people but says that they will keep struggling "even if this takes five, ten, or more years." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 165.)*

28 September-- China's Jenmin Jih Pao publishes an article entitled "Refutation of the New Leaders of the Soviet Communist Party on so called United Action" which accuses Moscow of "vainly attempting to extinguish the roaring flames of the Vietnamese peoples revolution and pulling the Viet Nam question into the orbit of Soviet-US collaboration..." It charges: "You have cooperated with the United States in playing the fraudulent game of unconditional negotiations. You are following the policy of involvement through aid in an attempt to bring control, the right to have a say and representation on the Viet Nam question." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 7 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), p. 53.)*

29 September-- In a press conference, Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi, speaking with unusual frankness and boldness poses the issue of a possible US attack in the starkest terms: "It is up to the U.S. President and the Pentagon to decide whether the United States wants a big war with China today. We cherish no illusions about U.S. imperialism. We are fully prepared against U.S. aggression. If the U.S. imperialists are determined to launch a war of aggression against us, they are welcome to come sooner, to come as early as tomorrow. Let the Indian reactionaries, the British imperialists and the Japanese military come along with them! Let the modern revisionists act in coordination with them from the north! We will still win in the end...For sixteen years we have been waiting for the U.S. imperialists to come in and attack us. My hair has turned grey in waiting. Perhaps I will not have the luck to see the U.S. imperialist invasion of China, but my children may see it, and they will resolutely carry on the fight. Let no correspondent think that I am bellicose. It is the U.S. imperialists who are brutal and vicious...Should the U.S. imperialists invade China's mainland, we will take all necessary measures to defeat them. By then, the war will have no boundaries... With the defeat of U.S. imperialism, the time will come when imperialism and colonialism will be really liquidated throughout the world. The ideal is bound to come true with the world truly becoming a community of nations with different social systems coexisting peacefully. China is ready to make all the necessary sacrifices for this noble ideal..." *(Text in Peking Review, VIII, no. 41 (8 October 1965), p. 14.)*

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October-- A People's Revolutionary Party training manual describes Party goals and policies: "The Party [objective]...is to overthrow imperialism, colonialism, and feudalism, to build a life of peace, prosperity, and happiness without oppression and extortion...Once independence is obtained, the next step is unification, constructed and consolidated in every way to make the country powerful and rich, a stronghold of peace. Then will come the social reorganization, along socialist-communist principles, without land demarcations, cooperating in rural electrification, re-education of individuals, nationalization of private property, cultural and scientific education for everyone, progressing day by day to better and better things in all fields. Also, helping other small weak countries to struggle against imperialism and rid the world of conflict and to help provide everyone with freedom, legality, warmth, food, and happiness..." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 143.)*

1 October-- Hanoi's Nhan Dan accuses British Prime Minister Harold Wilson of making "wily propaganda [in his efforts to convene an international conference on Vietnam] for the conditions put by the US...aimed at forcing the Vietnamese people to surrender." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 7 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), pp. 61-62.)*

3 October-- Speaking at a banquet in Peking given by visiting Prince Norodom Sihanouk, Chou En-lai warns: "If U.S. Imperialism presses ahead along the dangerous path of war expansion, we will unhesitatingly join the heroic Indochinese peoples in resolutely, thoroughly, completely and totally driving the U.S. aggressors out of Indochina and the whole of Southeast Asia." *(New York Times, 4 October 1965, pp. 1 and 3.)*

17-19 October-- On 17 October, Norodom Sihanouk announces that the Soviet Union has humiliated him in a manner that is "a virtual provocation for the rupture of relations between the two countries." He states that while in Pyongyang, North Korea, he had received a note from Moscow informing him that the Soviet leaders were "very busy" and would be unable to meet him next month as planned. The note offered to allow him to cross Soviet territory on the way to other Communist countries in Eastern Europe and suggested that he arrange through diplomatic channels another date to visit Moscow. Apparently the incident had been triggered by Moscow's displeasure over the growing closeness of Cambodia and Communist China and Sihanouk's support for a number of policies which Peking supports and the USSR opposes. On 19 October, however, a Soviet Government statement declares that the request to postpone Sihanouk's visit "in no way signifies any change in the policy of the Soviet Union toward Cambodia"—that the two countries always have had and still have friendly ties. *(New York Times, 18 and 20 October 1965, pp. 1 and 3, 4 respectively.)*

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November-- The Soviet-oriented periodical World Marxist Review frequently contains articles calling for international solidarity with the people of Vietnam. In the November issue, pledges of aid are noted from Hungary, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Cuba, Mongolia, Bulgaria, Poland, East Germany, Korea and China. The journal quotes Soviet Party chief Brezhnev: "In fulfilment of its internationalist duty the Soviet Union is rendering extensive aid to our Vietnamese comrades...We have already delivered a considerable amount of arms and military equipment to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and will continue our policy of giving the DRV the material and political aid necessary to repel American aggression. We welcome joint efforts by all the fraternal socialist countries in support of the Vietnamese people fighting imperialist aggression." *("Solidarity With the People of Vietnam", World Marxist Review, VIII, no. 11 (November 1965), p. 82.)*

7 November-- On the anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, the Soviet Government newspaper Izvestia issues what might be termed a "state of the world" message. With regard to Vietnam, it notes that the USSR "has been rendering and continues to render full political support and the necessary economic and military assistance to fraternal Vietnam. Other socialist countries are also within their powers rendering assistance to Vietnam. The number of demonstrations in defense of embattled Vietnam is increasing all over the world. The American military have not succeeded and will never...[be successful] in breaking down the Vietnamese people." As to Soviet dealings with China, Izvestia states that "[w]e are striving to improve relations, smooth out differences, and strengthen friendship with the People's Republic of China. We, for our part, have done everything possible to this end; and now the question of development of relations between the Soviet Union and China...depends on the Chinese leaders." The outlook for improved Soviet-US relations appears fairly dim: "The Soviet Union has declared time and again that possibilities exist also for improvement of our relations with the United States of America. However, the United States' war of aggression against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam is an obstacle to this." *(Text in Reprints from the Soviet Press, I, no. 5 (2 December 1965), pp. 20, 24-26.)*

11 November-- A long anti-Soviet article is published jointly by the editorial departments of Peking's People's Daily and Red Flag. It charges the "Khrushchev revisionists" with having undermined the common basis of unity between the two countries. It states: "...the relation between the Khrushchev revisionists and ourselves is certainly not one in which 'what binds us together is much stronger than what divides us,' as alleged by the new leaders of the CPSU; on all the fundamental issues of the present epoch the relation is one of sharp opposition; there are things that

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divide us and nothing that unites us, things that are antagonistic and nothing that is common...Since there is such a difference of fundamental line, the achievement of unity requires either that we discard Marxism-Leninism and follow their revisionism, or that they renounce revisionism and return to the path of Marxism-Leninism. These are the only alternatives..." The Chinese charge that united action is impossible with those who "transpose enemies with friends": "The reactionary nature of Khrushchev revisionism is expressed in concentrated form in the line of Soviet-U.S. collaboration for the domination of the world. The Khrushchev clique completely transposed enemies and friends; it regarded U.S. imperialism, the arch enemy of the people of the world, as its closest friend, and the Marxist-Leninists of the world, including those of the Soviet Union, as its principal enemy...Let us consider the facts: ONE. Immediately after taking office, the new leaders of the CPSU extolled Johnson as 'sensible' and 'moderate.' They have continued to proclaim that the Soviet Union and the United States are two super-powers on which the fate of the world depends, that 'there are sufficiently broad areas for cooperation' between them, and that 'there are still many unutilized potentialities'...TWO. The signing of the partial nuclear test ban treaty by the Soviet Union, the United States and Britain was an important landmark in Khrushchev's alliance with the United States against China. Not only have the new leaders of the CPSU accepted this legacy, but with this treaty as a basis they are actively plotting new deals with the United States for the 'prevention of nuclear proliferation' and similar so-called 'disarmament' measures in an effort to maintain the monopoly of the two nuclear overlords, the Soviet Union and the United States, against China and all other independent countries...THREE. U.S. imperialism has been using the United Nations as a tool for opposing the revolutions of the people of the world...Wherever the people rise up in armed struggle against U.S. imperialism or win victories in such struggle, and wherever U.S. imperialism suffers defeats and finds itself in a predicament, the new leaders of the CPSU hurriedly come forward to help it out. Together with the U.S. imperialists, they are using the United Nations to attack, weaken and divide the forces opposing imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism, and to save, strengthen and extend U.S. imperialist positions...FOUR. The new leaders of the CPSU have...carried further their alliance against China with the Indian reactionaries who are controlled by the U.S. imperialists...So long as their line of Soviet-U.S. collaboration against world revolution remains unchanged, and so long as they do not abandon their alliance with U.S. imperialism and reaction, we absolutely refuse to take any 'united action' with them." The article charges that the new Soviet leaders are taking united action with the US on the Vietnam issue. For example: "On February 16 this year, the day after Kosygin's return

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to Moscow, the Soviet Government officially put before Viet Nam and China a proposal to convene a new international conference on Indo-China without prior conditions, which in fact was advocacy of 'unconditional negotiations' on the Viet Nam question...In addition, the new leaders of the CPSU have been engaged in secret diplomatic activities. In a nutshell, their purpose is to help the United States to bring about 'peace talks' by deception, 'peace talks' which could go on indefinitely and allow the United States to hang on in south Viet Nam indefinitely." *("Refutation of the New Leaders of the CPSU on 'United Action'", in Donald S. Zagoria, Vietnam Triangle (New York: Pegasus, 1967), pp. 212-21.)*

17 November-- In a letter to Nobel Peace Prize winner Linus Pauling, Ho Chi Minh reiterates his Government's demand that "the most correct way" to a peaceful settlement of the Vietnam conflict is through the 4-point plan of the DRV and the 5-point statement of the NLF (see 22 March and 8 April entries). He charges that the US is "using South Vietnam as a testing ground for a new-type war of aggression as well as for new kinds of modern weapons and means of warfare, which will be eventually employed in other countries with a view to suppressing the national-liberation movement and establishing U.S. rule over the world." He protests the "barbarous means of warfare" used by the aggressors, including napalm and phosphorous bombs, toxic chemicals, poison gas, etc. He denounces the massive B-52 raids on the South and the daily bombing of the North. American offers to negotiate are nothing more than "deceitful talk on the part of the U.S. rulers, whose policy is to negotiate from a position of strength...in order to compel the Vietnamese people to lay down their arms and give up their legitimate aspirations." *(Ho Chi Minh, "Reply to Professor Linus Pauling", Against U.S. Aggression, For National Salvation (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1967), pp. 96-99.)*

18 November-- Ho Chi Minh, in an interview with British journalist Felix Greene, states that "President Johnson's so-called offer of 'unconditional discussions' means that the Vietnamese people must accept U.S. conditions. These are: U.S. imperialism will cling to South Vietnam, carry on its policy of aggression and refuse to recognize the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation as the sole genuine representative of the South Vietnamese people. Those are conditions imposed by the aggressors, which the Vietnamese people will never accept...genuine independence must be achieved if there is to be real peace. The question is very clear: U.S. imperialism is the aggressor. It must stop its air attacks on the North, put an end to its aggression in the South, withdraw its troops from South Vietnam, and let the Vietnamese people settle themselves their own affairs, as provided for in the Geneva Agreements. Peace will then be immediately restored. In short, the U.S. Government must declare and prove

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by actual deeds its acceptance of the four-point stand of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, which fully conforms to the main political and military provisions of the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam. This stand is the only basis for a correct settlement of the Vietnam question...The truth is that President Johnson wants neither peace nor peace negotiations. As a matter of fact, at the very moment when he talks a lot about peace discussions, the U.S. imperialists are further expanding the war of aggression in South Vietnam, massively sending there tens of thousands of U.S. troops and extending 'escalation' in North Vietnam...The contention that the southern part of our fatherland is 'a neighbour country' separate from the North is a misleading one. It is just like saying that the southern states of the United States constitute a country separate from the northern states." As to US State Department charges that the conflict in South Vietnam is a product of "Aggression from the North", Ho replies: "To fabricate false evidence in order to slander North Vietnam is a deceitful trick of the U.S. Government to cover up its aggression in South Vietnam. The truth is that the United States and its satellites have brought in foreign troops to wage aggression on South Vietnam, in contravention of the 1954 Geneva Agreements. The present patriotic struggle against U.S. aggression in South Vietnam is being waged by the people and Liberation forces of South Vietnam under the leadership of the National Front for Liberation." As to the costs of the war, he says, "there must be, of course, losses and sacrifices. Our people are determined to persevere in the fight, and to undergo sacrifices for ten or twenty years or a longer time till final victory, because there is nothing more valuable than independence and freedom. We are determined not to flinch before difficulties and temporary losses. We are determined not to submit to U.S. aggression. We are determined to defend the freedom and independence of our fatherland. At the same time, we are determined to help prevent the U.S. imperialists from inflicting the calamity of aggression on other nations." Moreover, "[a]ll U.S. attempts to divide Vietnam and China, and to divide the socialist countries are doomed to ignominious failure." Finally, he praises the American people for their "resolute" struggle against the war and declares: "U.S. imperialism is the common enemy of our two peoples. With our united struggle, it will certainly be defeated. Our peoples will be victorious."
(Ho Chi Minh, "Interview Granted to British Journalist Felix Greene", Against U.S. Aggression, For National Salvation (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1967), pp. 102-10.)

20 November-- Italian Foreign Minister Fanfani writes President Johnson that he has information which he believes might lead to a negotiated solution of the conflict in Vietnam. He says that

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on 11 November in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh and Pham Van Dong expressed to two persons known to Fanfani a strong desire to find a peaceful solution to the war and in sum stated that "in order for the peace negotiations to come about, there will be necessary (a) a cease-fire (by air, by sea, by land) in the entire territory of Vietnam (north and south); the cessation—that is, of all belligerent operations (including therefore also the cessation of debarkation of further American troops); (b) declaration according to which the Geneva Agreements of 1954 will be taken as the basis for the negotiations—a declaration made up of the four points formulated by Hanoi, points that are in reality the explanation of the Geneva text and which, therefore, can be reduced to a single point: application, in other words, of the Geneva Accord." Fanfani further mentions that the text of the communication he received adds that "the Government in Hanoi is prepared to initiate negotiations without first requiring actual withdrawal of the American troops." Ho Chi Minh also is reported to have stated: "I am prepared to go anywhere; to meet anyone." *(90th Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (3d Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1967), p. 177, citing Department of State Bulletin, vol 54, pp. 11-13.)*

26 November-- Secretary Rusk discusses the Hanoi peace-feelers that were reportedly relayed by Secretary-General U Thant to Ambassador Stevenson and had been revealed by Eric Sevareid, "The Final Troubled Hours of Adlai Stevenson", Look, 30 November 1965, pp. 84-86. Rusk says that it was "clear beyond a peradventure of doubt" that Hanoi had not been prepared to discuss peace in Southeast Asia based on the agreements of 1954 and 1962. On the contrary, in the autumn of 1964 the DRV had increased its infiltration, including units of its regular army. Rusk states: "Throughout all of last year, the general attitude of the Communist world was that they might consider some device to save the face of the United States while they themselves imposed their will upon South Viet-Nam. Our attitude was and is that we are not interested in saving face but in saving South Viet-Nam." *(Richard P. Stebbins, ed., Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1965 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1966), pp. 187-88.)*

30 November-- At a planeside interview at Andrews AFB upon returning from Vietnam, Secretary McNamara is asked to comment on a statement by Senator Richard Russell that the United States should bomb Haiphong. McNamara replies: "It's not our objective to destroy the Government of North Vietnam; it is our objective to preserve the independence of South Vietnam. And it's consistent with that latter objective to concentrate our bombing on the lines of infiltration. The North Vietnamese today, we believe, have nine regiments of their regular army in South Vietnam.

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We believe also that they have been infiltrating additional men into that country at the rate of about 1,500 a month during the rainy season and that their level of infiltration will approach 4,500 men per month during the forthcoming dry season. That compares with about 800 a month last year. It's to reduce that level of infiltration and particularly to reduce the infiltration of equipment, supplies to support those forces, that our bombing of North Vietnam is carried on." *(89th Cong 2d Sess, Supplemental Defense Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1966, Hearings before the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Armed Services, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1966), p. 93.)*

December-- Claude Lightfoot of the American Communist Party, writing in the Soviet-oriented international affairs journal World Marxist Review, offers an analysis of the peace movement in the United States. This movement, he notes, is comprised of three groups:

"1. conscious anti-imperialist elements;

2. forces who think the government is sincerely trying to end the conflict and are ready to back actions for negotiations;

3. those who put conditions on the government while accepting the idea that the main reason for the continuation of the war is the 'intransigence' displayed by the Viet Cong and North Vietnam.

Groups two and three make up the majority of those masses who desire peace and an end to the threat of a thermonuclear war.

But irrespective of these variations in assessments, the central point is that most people are willing to struggle. And the more advanced forces have not at all times worked to find tactical or common denominators to enlist united efforts of all forces. We in the U.S. are trying to correct this weakness.

We would urge the world Communist movement also to adopt tactics and methods which will facilitate the broadening of the American peace movement. For unless changes are made internally in the United States, then the peace of the world will hang perpetually in the balance. For those who think that purely military means will rout American imperialism are whistling in the dark. American imperialism can be defeated. But this cannot be done decisively without the active opposition of broad segments of the American people. Thus the struggle to unite powerful sections of the American people with the other two components of the peace forces is the central problem at this time." *(Claude Lightfoot, "Prevent War, Ensure Social Progress", World Marxist Review, VIII, no. 12 (December 1965), p. 57.)*

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3 December-- The National Council of Churches issues a call to the US Government to stop the bombing of North Vietnam long enough to establish a more favorable atmosphere for peace negotiations. This is the first policy statement on the Vietnam War by a major American religious body. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 168.)*

4 December-- Secretary Rusk writes Italian Foreign Minister Amintore Fanfani that the United States reaffirms its willingness to enter discussions or negotiations without any pre-conditions. The US would also be willing to engage in negotiations on the basis of the 1954 Geneva Agreements. The United States, however, does not agree with the four points advanced by Hanoi. Specifically, the political program of the so-called National Liberation Front has no basis in the Geneva Agreements. Thus, the DRV's apparent insistence on a prior declaration accepting the four points appears to be both inconsistent with the Agreements and to require a substantive condition to negotiations. Nevertheless, the US is prepared to include the four points for consideration in any peace talks along with any proposals which the United States, South Vietnam, and other governments may wish to advance. The Americans are also willing to begin negotiations without a cease-fire. If there is a cessation of certain military operations on the one side, there would have to be an equivalent cessation of military activities on the other. Hanoi's proposal does not seem to impose a restraint on continued infiltration of forces and equipment from North to South Vietnam. The United States does note that the DRV apparently would not insist on the actual withdrawal of American forces prior to the initiation of negotiations. Rusk observes: "We are thus far from persuaded that statements by Ho Chi Minh and Pham Van Dong quoted by your Italian sources indicated a real willingness for unconditional negotiations." *(90th Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (3d Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1967), pp. 178-79, citing Department of State Bulletin, vol 54, pp. 11-13.)*

9 December-- The All-Union Supreme Soviet, theoretically (though not in practice) the highest governing body in the Soviet Union, issues a statement on Vietnam:

"The USSR Supreme Soviet strongly condemns the armed US aggression against South Viet Nam and the aggression against the DRV. Responsibility for the continuation of this policy and its consequences lies with the US Government...The US aggression against Viet Nam is regarded as a violation of international law standards and a gross breach of the Geneva Agreements of 1954 which the US Government officially undertook to observe...

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The continuation of the aggression and the dispatch by the US Government of new units of US forces and military material to Viet Nam...can only lead to an expansion of the military conflict and to a further aggravation of the situation in Indo-China and the world...The Soviet Union, in fulfillment of its international duty, has given, is giving, and will continue to give full support and help to the Vietnamese people in the struggle against US imperialism. Peace in Viet Nam can only be restored by strictly carrying out the Geneva Agreements on Viet Nam, ceasing the US aggression against the sovereign state of the DRV, ending armed aggression against South Viet Nam, evacuating the forces of the United States and its allies from South Viet Nam, liquidating all military bases in this country, and respecting the right of the Vietnamese people to decide their own affairs without foreign interference.

Strengthening unity of action and cohesion in the ranks of the socialist states and all peace-loving countries in the cause of giving support and assistance to the valiant Vietnamese people will help toward the rapid curbing of the forces of imperialism and aggression which are encroaching against the freedom of the Vietnamese people and their sacred rights, and toward the restoration of peace in Viet Nam..." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 7 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), p. 73.)*

18 December-- Radio Hanoi announces: "Yesterday morning, December 17, 1965, the United States State Department published news reports based on the contents of a message from Italian Foreign Minister Amintore Fanfani, President of the United Nations General Assembly, to United States President Lyndon Johnson, dealing with what they called 'a probe about negotiations' on the part of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam...The Viet Nam news agency is authorized to declare that those news reports spread by the United States State Department are sheer groundless fabrication." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 7 (Canberra: GPO), p. 77.)*

21 December-- Several new agreements on Soviet economic and technical (military) assistance to the DRV are signed in Moscow. *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 9 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), p. 37.)*

21 December-- Chou En-lai delivers an address dealing with the responsibilities of the socialist countries towards the DRV. He suggests that the goals of US imperialism have not changed, that talk about unconditional discussions and suspension of

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bombing are merely smoke screens to expand the war. Thus, the "only thing for all peace loving countries and people to do is to give resolute support to the Vietnamese and thoroughly defeating the US aggressors...It is all the more the bounden international duty of every Socialist country to give all out support to the fraternal Vietnamese people. Therefore, whether or not a Socialist country firmly supports the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation in their just stand in the struggle against US aggression and for national salvation; whether or not it constantly exposes and combats the peace talks scheme of US Imperialism; and whether or not the Vietnamese people receive effective and practical and mature aid in good time, constitutes an important criterion for judging whether its attitude to Imperialism is real or sham and whether its help to the Vietnamese people is real or sham?" In an obvious reference to the Soviets, he states: "If a person covertly conspires with US Imperialism, while giving some superficial aid to the Vietnamese people, if he actually assists the US Imperialist plot of peace talks, by shouting a few slogans against US Imperialist aggression in Viet Nam and if he actually sows discord in an attempt to undermine the Vietnamese people's unity against aggression and the unity of the Vietnamese and Chinese against Imperialism, by professing that the Socialist countries should unite to fight Imperialism, then he is definitely not helping the Vietnamese people, but is capitalising on the revolutionary cause of the Vietnamese people for his dirty deal with the United States and hoping to attain his ulterior motives through such aid...This is an impermissable betrayal, not only of the Vietnamese people but of the people of all the Socialist countries and the people of the whole world as well." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 7 (Canberra: GPO), p. 78.)*

24 December-- A halt to US air strikes against North Vietnam is begun. This bombing pause will eventually be discontinued after 37 days. *(Donald S. Zagoria, Vietnam Triangle (New York: Pegasus, 1967), p. 153.)*

25 December-- A Pravda editorial defends Soviet aid policy to the DRV against Chinese attacks:

"The Soviet Union and the socialist countries are giving the DRV and the entire Vietnamese people the necessary aid in the cause of repelling American aggression. They regard the giving of such aid as fulfillment of their internationalist duty to a fraternal socialist state that has been subjected to a bandit attack...

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...Faithful to proletarian internationalism, the USSR is helping the DRV strengthen its defense capacity. The Soviet Union is doing everything in its power to see to it that deliveries of Soviet combat materiel, armaments and engineering equipment, as well as the necessary ammunition, are carried out precisely on the intended schedules.

The leaders of the DRV and the National Liberation Front of South Viet Nam have often highly appraised the aid and support given by the Soviet people to the people of Viet Nam. These appraisals, as well as the actual facts of the effectiveness of Soviet weapons in repulsing American aggression against the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, are known to all the world.

All the socialist states are showing support for Viet Nam. But the aid of the socialist commonwealth to the fighting Vietnamese people would be even more effective if the leadership of the Communist Party of China, which has begun to follow a special political course aimed at splitting the international Communist movement, did not reject unified actions in support of Viet Nam. The Chinese press has developed a campaign of slander, attempting to discredit the Soviet Union's aid to Viet Nam. An article published in the newspaper Jenmin Jih Pao and the magazine Hungchi on November 11 went so far as to claim that the CPSU 'treats friends like enemies,' that it is engaging in 'close joint actions with the American imperialists' and is 'playing at helping Viet Nam'. Such distortions of reality only harm the Vietnamese people's struggle.

The situation urgently requires the rallying of the main anti-imperialist forces to repel the imperialist aggressors. The Soviet Union is struggling tirelessly for the unity of action of the democratic and progressive forces of the whole world in support of the Vietnamese people. The position on questions of giving real effective aid to the fraternal socialist country and to all the Vietnamese people now serves as an important criterion of dedication to the great cause of revolution and the freedom of peoples." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. ? (Canberra: GPO), p. 79.)*

27 December-- On 7 January 1966, a State Department press release sums up the "United States Official Position on Viet-Nam", which had previously been issued on 27 December 1965. These statements are described as being on public record and concern elements which the United States believes can go into a peace in Southeast Asia. "1. The Geneva Agreements of 1954 and 1962 are an adequate basis for peace in Southeast Asia; 2. We would welcome a conference on Southeast Asia or on any part thereof; 3. We would welcome 'negotiations without preconditions' as the

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17 nations put it; 4. We would welcome unconditional discussions as President Johnson put it; 5. A cessation of hostilities could be the first order of business at a conference or could be the subject of preliminary discussions; 6. Hanoi's four points could be discussed along with other points which others might wish to propose; 7. We want no U.S. bases in Southeast Asia; 8. We do not desire to retain U.S. troops in South Viet-Nam after peace is assured; 9. We support free elections in South Viet-Nam to give the South Vietnamese a government of their own choice; 10. The question of reunification of Viet-Nam should be determined by the Vietnamese through their own free decision; 11. The countries of Southeast Asia can be non-aligned or neutral if that be their option; 12. We would much prefer to use our resources for the economic reconstruction of Southeast Asia than in war. If there is peace, North Viet-Nam could participate in a regional effort to which we would be prepared to contribute at least one billion dollars; 13. The President has said 'The Viet Cong would not have difficulty being represented and having their views presented if for a moment Hanoi decided she wanted to cease aggression. I don't think that would be an insurmountable problem.' 14. We have said publicly and privately that we could stop the bombing of North Viet-Nam as a step toward peace although there has not been the slightest hint or suggestion from the other side as to what they would do if the bombing stopped." *(Richard P. Stebbins, ed., Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1965 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1966), pp. 191-92.)*

31 December-- Canadian Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson is reported by the New York Times as saying that "[m]any Communist diplomats have expressed their belief that a pause in the American bombing would ultimately bring about negotiations...Janos Peter [Hungarian Foreign Minister] said as much to Secretary of State Dean Rusk." *(Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs, Mission to Hanoi (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), p. 294.)*

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1966-- In an article first published in Hoc Tap, Nguyen Van Vinh, who is Deputy Chief of Staff of the DRV Vietnam People's Army, discusses the military and political situation in Vietnam. He says that "the neo-colonialist character of U.S. imperialism has been laid bare before the world people; the enemy's efforts to stem and isolate the South Vietnamese people's struggle, and carry out sabotage activities in North Vietnam with commandos sent from the South, have met a bitter fiasco...Apart from such oft-cited fundamental factors as the unjust nature of the war they have imposed on us, the characteristics of the present epoch, and the unfavourable—for them—world relation of forces, the following direct causes point to their inevitable defeat in Vietnam...First, even the Americans put 300,000 or more troops

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into South Vietnam it will be impossible for them to transform the existing relation of forces to the point where they can change the situation in their favour...Indeed, even if American reinforcements including those of their satellites, arrive in hundreds of thousands, this will not prevent the local puppet troops from being worn down, wiped out or disintegrated in the same proportions while the Liberation armed forces, taking advantage of favourable conditions will rapidly reinforce their ranks. Thus there will be no favourable change for the Americans in the facts of the past year. The massive landing of American troops has in no way basically changed the relation of forces between them and the puppets on the one hand, and the Liberation armed forces on the other. In general this has remained unchanged but where changes have taken place, they have been in favour of the National Front for Liberation and not the U.S. imperialists... If we only count the economic war potential, the arms and technique utilized, then it is clear that the enemy is stronger than we are in South Vietnam. In this field we have to fight a stronger enemy with a small force. But if we consider all the elements which constitute the forces that both sides are able to throw into the war, in the South of our country as well as in the whole of Vietnam, we can conclude that we are the stronger. The American imperialists can only mobilize a part of their forces for the war in Vietnam. Because their unjust war of aggression is not supported by the American and world people, because it is being waged thousands of miles from the United States and they are obliged to cope with hostile situation in many other parts of the world. The Saigon puppet army and administration have been seriously weakened. The troops of satellite countries that Washington has managed to have sent to Vietnam through all sorts of intrigues, corruption and pressures, are very limited. All the three forces have no ideal for which to fight. The Americans having no alternative but to wage a war according to outmoded bourgeois military concepts, counting on arms and technique to try and deal rapid blows and snatch a quick military victory... On our side, because we wage a just war, a self-defence war on our own soil, we not only have armed forces at our disposal but also millions of patriots taking part in the war in a thousand different ways...We can very rapidly replenish and develop our revolutionary armed forces from the immense manpower reserves of our population...Second, the American imperialists and their traitor valets are incapable of 'pacifying' South Vietnam...our adversaries have never found a quiet corner to establish a foothold...The guerrillas...carry out sudden and devastating blows even right in the centre of these towns and solidly defended bases...The enemy is not free to exploit the human and material resources even in the areas he controls and can neither eat nor sleep in peace in his resting-places...Military

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history shows that no belligerent can be considered winning if he does not have a secure rear, if he is unable to pacify the inhabited areas which he has seized and exploited the human and material resources there for his war needs. In South Vietnam we have the following situation existing over wide areas and for many years. Our enemies cannot succeed in pacifying their rear areas and in maintaining a grip on the population in the regions they control. Because of this, their defeat is inevitable...Third, the army and people of South Vietnam are perfectly capable of wiping out and bringing about the disintegration of the major part of the puppet army and administration... Fourth, the army and people of South Vietnam as well as the army and people of Vietnam as a whole are perfectly capable of defeating the American army of aggression...U.S. air-power at present constitutes an appreciable support in fire-power and rapid transport of troops in South Vietnam. We must however make a correct appreciation of the value of each category of planes...As to B.52 strategic bombers, there are now two divisions of the Pacific Strategic Air Command engaged in South Vietnam and they have carried out more than a hundred bombing raids. However, if one compares the number of raids and the quantity of bombs dropped with the damage caused, one must conclude that these planes are the least efficient of the American air force, those that hit their targets the least often and which cause the least number of dead and wounded for the South Vietnam armed forces. The raids which our enemies classify as for 'extermination' undertaken with the B.52's, would only be effective against big cities with high concentrations of industry and population, not equipped with modern defensive weapons. However, if they are sent against the towns of North Vietnam these planes, because of their big size and reduced speed will be the easiest to knock down. In South Vietnam, because of the low density of the rural population...and because of the wise distribution of the Liberation armed forces, plus the well-tested defensive measures against planes taken by the troops and the population, the use of B.52's, though very costly, has little effect...The other types of aviation operating in Vietnam in 1965, consists of about 2,870 planes. Most of them are used in South Vietnam of which about 1,070 helicopters, 1,090 combat planes and 710 of other types...The main role of the combat planes is to carry out isolated bombing raids or give close support to infantry engaged in ground operations...[However] their capacity for harm is reduced every day thanks to the progressive improvement of people's defence measures...To fight against enemy air-power, apart from protection measures taken by the population and troops, and the political struggle to force the enemy to halt the bombing raids and compensate the victims, crushing blows have rained down on the U.S. Air Force. In 1965 alone,

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over 900 planes were destroyed in South Vietnam, a great part of them on their own bases...In North Vietnam, the enemy bombers and fighters have caused certain losses in men and material and they have interfered with our communications and transport to a certain extent. However...the enemy's air-power can neither gain him the victory nor can it sabotage our largely agricultural economy, nor affect our regional industries and handicrafts, nor bring our communications and transport to a halt...Helicopters play an important role in increasing the mobility of enemy infantry. They only play a limited role in other missions as transports for material, evacuation of wounded, firing platforms, etc. As for the efficacity of helicoptered transport of puppet troops, the fiasco of 'helicopter tactics' in American 'special warfare' is a sufficient reply to the question...As for American ground troops landed by tens of thousands in South Vietnam, we must appreciate them at their true value in order to face up to them correctly...It is clear that the massive despatch of U.S. troops to South Vietnam will tend to prolong the war and make it still more fierce, it will result in more difficulties and losses for the South Vietnamese people. But from another viewpoint it is an excellent occasion for us to wipe out large numbers of the enemy's effectives...The more their effectives are thrown in, the more the American people will realize the realities of the situation, the more their opposition to Washington's policy of aggression grows in resoluteness, the more the American imperialists' will of aggression will be crushed and they will thus have to accept defeat." In sum, General Vinh concludes: "It is obvious that the prospect of great successes and of the final victory are widely opened up before us...However, the American imperialists will step up war efforts to cling to the South and pursue sabotage activities in the North...Therefore, the war will be fiercer in both zones... We are determined to defend and build the North at all costs, ensure communications and transport, and see to the increase of production in whatever situation...We are ready unstintedly to support our Southern compatriots' heroic struggle..." *(Nguyen Van Vinh, The Vietnamese People Are On The Road To Victory (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1966), pp. 7, 13-18, 20-24, 30-31.)*

1 January-- The Soviet newspaper Pravda denounces the American "peace offensive" as "very much like a diversionary propaganda maneuver." It claims that a military offensive parallels the diplomatic one. *(Donald S. Zagoria, Vietnam Triangle (New York: Pegasus, 1967), p. 154.)*

4 January-- One of the sharpest points of conflict between the Soviets and the Chinese has involved the issue of assistance

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to the DRV. In this period, the USSR began to complain that many of the aid shipments sent overland by rail through China to North Vietnam were being obstructed and diverted from their destination. With the promulgation of the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" in the People's Republic, reports of whole shipments of Soviet arms and other aid being stolen by "hooligans" would circulate and further embitter the relations between the two Communist giants. On 4 January, Chinese Foreign Minister and Vice Premier Chen Yi responds to early complaints by Moscow:

"China has abided by agreement and punctually transported the military material for Viet Nam which the Soviet Union asked us to help transport...

The Soviet Union is the largest European socialist country. If it really wanted to help the Vietnamese people, if it really wanted to support and help their struggle against US aggression and for national salvation in an effective and allround way, it could have taken all kinds of measures in many fields to immobilize forces of the United States and constantly exposed the US plots of peace talks. But the Soviet leaders have not done so; on the contrary, they have in fact been giving the United States every facility, so that it can concentrate its forces against Viet Nam and continuously spread the smoke-screen of peace talks to becloud world opinion...

The Soviet leaders are evading the major issue when they deliberately reduce the important political question of supporting the Viet Nam people's struggle against US aggression and for national salvation to a matter of transit of aid material for Viet Nam...

The Soviet leaders harp on the fact that the Soviet Union has no common borders with Viet Nam, as if all aid material for Viet Nam has of necessity to go through China. This is not true. There are sea routes between the Soviet Union and Viet Nam. Why can't Soviet military material for Viet Nam be shipped by sea as is that of other countries?

But the Soviet Union dare not take the sea routes. It has asked us to transport all of its military material for Viet Nam. We know very well what are the things we have helped it to transport. Both in quantity and quality, they are far from commensurate with the strength of the Soviet Union.

But the Soviet leaders are boasting about this meagre aid and have constantly and everywhere spread the rumor that China is obstructing the transit of Soviet aid material for Viet Nam. Naturally, this cannot but strengthen people's conviction that their so-called aid to Viet Nam is given with ulterior motives.

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In reality, the Soviet leaders...want to make use of their so-called aid to control the Vietnamese situation and bring the Viet Nam question into the orbit of US-Soviet collaboration."

Previous warnings to the US are also repeated: "If US imperialism insists on extending the war to China, we cannot but resolutely take up the challenge and we will not call off the battle until complete victory..." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 7 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), pp. 80-81.)*

5 January-- The National Liberation Front issues an uncompromising statement on the US bombing halt: "The US imperialists, in covering their mad, adventurous policy of military buildup, have spread a smokescreen of fake peace before public opinion and have kept harping on the trick of unconditional peace negotiations to arrive at a political solution for the Vietnamese problem. Recently, they have initiated the so-called temporary cessation of the bombing of the North to provide conditions for the negotiations...The South Vietnamese and the NFLSV fully approve the clearcut and correct attitude of our northern compatriots as manifested by the four-point stand stated by Premier Pham Van Dong...Some 14,000,000 South Vietnamese pledge to make greater efforts, strike harder at the heads of the aggressors, deal them heavier punishments, shatter their imaginary victory, and make them realize that their only honorable path at the present time is quick withdrawal from South Viet Nam, and that they must quit immediately, unconditionally, and permanently, the bombing of the north, and let the Vietnamese and Indochinese peoples alone." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 7 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), p. 83.)*

7 January-- The only real issue in Vietnam as far as Peking was concerned was the removal of US troops from the South, before which no negotiations could take place under any format or sponsorship. The multiplicity of official proposals, suggestions and rumors that arose throughout the period were all treated with the same unqualified rejection on the ground that they served American "imperialism" by giving it the opportunity to negotiate without having to first withdraw its forces. Peking was especially wary of US attempts to coax Hanoi to the bargaining table through a halt in the bombing of the DRV. When, on 27 December 1965, the United States issued its "Fourteen Points" on a peaceful settlement only three days after it began a bombing pause, the Chinese were quick to issue devastating comments aimed, in all probability, at heading off any positive response from Hanoi. Stating that the Geneva Accords as the

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"basis" for peace had "long been destroyed by the United States, with its aircraft and guns," Jenmin Jih Pao, in an official "Observer" article, explains: "The root of the matter is that the Johnson administration is aiming to induce the Vietnamese people to agree to negotiate, it is aiming to turn the [DRV] 4-point proposition and the Geneva Agreements into something negotiable, so that negotiations can drag on indefinitely and the U.S. troops can hang on in South Vietnam." Concerned lest Hanoi give in to American bombing pressure and work out an agreement that would enable the United States to retain South Vietnam as a major base, "Observer" continues: "Withdrawal of all troops and war material by the United States from South Vietnam is the prerequisite for a political settlement of the Vietnam question; it is the key to the preservation of the Geneva Agreements. Since the Johnson administration is not withdrawing its troops and has no intention of doing so, what talk can there be of 'free elections' and 'reunification' in Vietnam?" *(Jenmin Jih Pao, 7 January 1966.)*

9 January-- While China's insistence that the Geneva Agreements were no longer applicable to the Vietnam situation was not a new argument, People's Daily now states, in essence, that all negotiations are unnecessary except to put a final stamp of approval on a US defeat. A "Commentator" article suggests that the war can end in only two ways: "A just war waged by an oppressed nation against aggression may end up in one of two ways: One, when the aggressor is completely wiped out or driven away—in this case there is no question at all of negotiations; and the other, when the aggressor is badly trounced and acknowledges defeat—in such a case it is possible that negotiations may be needed to assess the situation and work out a solution." *(Text in Peking Review, IX, no. 3 (14 January 1966), p. 16.)*

14 January-- Following a visit to North Vietnam of a Soviet delegation headed by A. N. Shelepin, member of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, it is announced in a joint communique that the USSR has agreed to send more military and nonmilitary aid to North Vietnam. Full support is expressed for the 4-point plan of the DRV and the 5-point statement of the NLF. *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 7 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), pp. 87-88.)*

14 January-- North Vietnam officially rejects the American "peace offensive". Ho Chi Minh calls it "a trick, merely the repetition of old themes." *(Donald S. Zagoria, Vietnam Triangle (New York: Pegasus, 1967), p. 154.)*

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15 January-- The Vietnam "Fatherland Front" issues a statement on the 14-point American program. It declares that the US plan "only repeats the shopworn contentions which brazenly distort the patriotic struggle of the South Vietnamese people; slanderously charges North Viet Nam with committing aggression in the south; offers as a pretext the US commitment to its lackeys in Saigon to avoid withdrawing US aggressive troops from South Viet Nam, to cling to South Viet Nam, to perpetuate the partition of Viet Nam, and to refuse to recognize the NFLSV as the only genuine representative of the South Vietnamese people; and arrogantly forces the South Vietnamese people to lay down their arms to submit to US enslavement..." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 7 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), p. 88.)*

18 January-- General Vo Nguyen Giap, DRV Minister of Defense, states in an article in Nhan Dan that the "essence of the 'unconditional discussions' hoax is to compel our people to accept the United States aggressor's terms...We must step up our entire people's patriotic war and resolutely fight until victory...Our people are determined not to shrink from any sacrifice to bring the great struggle against the United States imperialists for national salvation to final victory... to achieve independence and peace, to defend the North, to liberate the South, to arrive at the reunification of the fatherland, and to make an appropriate contribution to the revolutionary struggle of the world's peoples, the heroic Vietnamese people in both zones are determined to fight, to fight until the end." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 7 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), p. 91.)*

21 January-- Testifying before the Senate Committees on Appropriations and Armed Services which are meeting to consider defense supplemental appropriations for FY 1966, Secretary McNamara discusses the foreign aid received by North Vietnam. He says that he believes that Soviet assistance consists of the SAM system which is supplied and installed by Soviet technicians but probably operated by North Vietnamese, to about half of the DRV MIG aircraft, to small amounts of other military hardware, and to the petroleum products used by the North Vietnamese. The Chinese supply most of the small arms that are infiltrated into South Vietnam, about half of the MIG aircraft, and logistical personnel to reconstruct the rail lines running northeast and northwest between Hanoi and the Nanning area and the Kunming areas of China. McNamara also states that these railways are important because they are the rail connection between Kunming and Yunnan and thus must carry Chinese commerce, particularly apatite ore which is used in making fertilizer. *(89th Cong 2d Sess,*

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Supplemental Defense Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1966, Hearings before the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Armed Services, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1966), pp. 147-48.)

24 January-- Responding to questions from members of the Senate Committees on Appropriations and Armed Services, General John P. McConnell, Chief of Staff, USAF, states that the bombing pause has given a military advantage to the Vietcong. He says: "...we have evidence that they are fixing up their bridges and putting their lines of communications back together. They have authorized people to drive around in the daytime and to haul goods around in the daytime where heretofore they only operated at night. Undoubtedly they have been able to get more supplies on their way into South Vietnam as a result of our failure to be constantly on them with bombs, and I would say that a definite military advantage has accrued to the North Vietnamese." *(89th Cong 2d Sess, Supplemental Defense Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1966, Hearings before the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate (Washington: GPO, 1966), pp. 318-31.)*

24 January-- Ho Chi Minh addresses a similar letter to Heads of State of selected countries, including China. He charges that the United States in its 14 points "is trying hard to cling to South Vietnam, to maintain there the puppet administration rigged up by it, and to perpetuate the partition of Vietnam." He repeats the conditions that North Vietnam expects for peace: "So long as the U.S. Army of aggression still remains on our soil, our people will resolutely fight against it. If the U.S. Government really wants a peaceful settlement, it must accept the four-point stand of the DRV Government and prove this by actual deeds; it must end unconditionally and for good all bombing raids and other war acts against the DRV. Only in this way can a political solution to the Vietnam problem be envisaged." He also says: "If the United States really wants peace it must recognize the NFLSV [National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam] as the sole genuine representative of the people of South Vietnam and engage in negotiations with it." *(Richard P. Stebbins, ed., Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1966 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1967), pp. 199-202.)*

24 January-- Speaking in retrospect about the Communist rejection of the US peace effort in the period of December 1965-January 1966 at a news conference on 9 February 1967, US Secretary of State Dean Rusk says: "As you recall, during the last pause in the bombing, on the 34th day, instead of coming back with counter-proposals or countersuggestions, they simply publicly required that we accept the notion that the Liberation Front should be

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the sole spokesman for the South Vietnamese people, that we accept their four points and get out of South Viet-Nam. Now that was obviously impossible." *(Department of State Bulletin, vol 56, p. 322.)*

26 January-- In a hearing in support of supplemental defense appropriations for 1966 before the House Committee on Appropriations, Secretary McNamara discusses the situation in Vietnam and the bombing campaign against the North. This hearing is taking place while the bombing pause is in effect. The Secretary states that the Communists have not elected to deescalate, noting: "We do know that they made substantial preparations in the latter part of 1965 to expand their routes of infiltration into South Vietnam. We also have evidence that they have increased the flow of men and material over those routes. In addition, we know that when they had a choice, after we defeated their monsoon offensive last summer, of either withdrawing and deescalating to a lower level of operations against the South Vietnamese, or replacing their losses and expanding still further; they chose the latter course." *(89th Cong 2nd Sess, Supplemental Defense Appropriations for 1966, Hearings before Subcommittees of the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives (Washington: GPO, 1966), pp. 21-40.)*

31 January-- In a public statement announcing resumption of bombing strikes against North Vietnam after a 37-day pause, President Johnson declares that efforts to arrive at a peaceful settlement have been denounced and rejected by Hanoi and Peking. The DRV announcement three days ago makes it clear that there is no readiness for peace in that regime. *(Public Papers of the Presidents, Lyndon B. Johnson, 1966 (Washington: GPO, 1967), vol 1, pp. 114-15.)*

February-- British Prime Minister Harold Wilson arrives in Moscow. Peking charges that he and Soviet Premier Kosygin are attempting to initiate peace talks. On 26 February, Pravda derides US Vice-President Hubert Humphrey's Far East and Southeast Asian tour. It claims that his "'mission of peace'... was in fact a mission of war..." *(Donald S. Zagoria, Vietnam Triangle (New York: Pegasus, 1967), p. 154.)*

1 February-- In an article in Hoc Tap, the Lao Dong theoretical monthly, General Vo Nguyen Giap declares that the United States "cannot escape the inevitable defeat which is likely to befall any aggressive army facing a whole nation resolute to resist them." He claims that the purpose of American actions in South Vietnam is to "control important strategic areas and set up firm bases as springboards" for attacks on "liberated areas" and to "decimate our forces." He says that the US is also trying

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to "prevent the collapse of the puppet army and administration" of South Vietnam. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 174.)*

1 February-- The DRV protests to the International Control Commission on Vietnam that the resumption of the American air attack has brought about "a very serious crisis to peace and security to all countries in Indo-China and Southeast Asia." Hanoi charges that US peace feelers have in reality been a smokescreen for "moves to intensify and expand the war of aggression in Viet Nam. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 174.)*

1 February-- Roger Hilsman, Director of the State Department Bureau of Intelligence and Research in 1961-62 and Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs in 1963-64, recommends that the air war against North Vietnam not be escalated, both because it was a mistake in the first place and because it would lead to further Communist counter-escalation. He says: "So long as the 35 to 45 industrial sites, dams, and powerplants remain intact in the North, the Communists have an incentive to keep their 300,000 regulars at home." If these targets are destroyed, however, the DRV will no longer have the need to keep these troops in the North but can deploy them southward. Also, "the most probable Communist response would be to introduce Chinese 'peoples army volunteers' in very, very large numbers." He favors concentrating on counterinsurgency operations—mainly conducted by South Vietnamese forces—in the South. He wants to "de-Americanize" the war, and to use American power "mainly to deter the Communists from escalating the fighting." He adds: "At the same time, we should push hard on a policy of firmness and flexibility designed to bring about negotiations not just on Vietnam but on the neutralization of the whole of Southeast Asia and on concrete steps toward an eventual accommodation between Communist China and the United States." *(89th Cong 2d Sess, United States Policy toward Asia, Hearings before the Subcommittee on the Far East and the Pacific of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives (Washington: GPO, 1966), pt 1, pp. 145-46.)*

2 February-- The French Government issues a statement that it can "only regret and disapprove of the resumption of bombing," which is "jeopardizing the cause of peace." The statement also says that the United Nations is not qualified to intervene, since China, the DRV, and South Vietnam are not members of that organization. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 174.)*

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2-26 February-- On 2 February, the United Nations Security Council votes to place the Vietnam question on its agenda. It then decides to adjourn for private and informal consultations. On this same day, Moscow denounces this "clumsy attempt to link the Geneva Agreements with the U.N., although...neither these agreements nor the Vietnam question as a whole are within the competence of the U.N...." On 26 February, Security Council President Matsui of Japan sends a letter to the UN Secretary-General and members of the Security Council which states that there are differing views among members on the course of action that the Council should take on the Vietnam situation but that there is a common feeling of "grave concern" and "a strong desire for the early cessation of hostilities and a peaceful solution of the Vietnamese problem." Matsui adds: "There appears to be a feeling that the termination of the conflict in Viet-Nam should be sought through negotiations in an appropriate forum in order to work out the implementation of the Geneva Accords." *(90th Cong 1st Sess, Submission of the Vietnam Conflict to the United Nations, Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate...on S. Con. Res. 44...S. Res. 180 (Washington: GPO, 1967), p. 196; Donald S. Zagoria, Vietnam Triangle (New York: Pegasus, 1967), p. 154.)*

6 February-- In a broadcast interview, Ambassador Harriman suggests that the United States might be willing to have the National Liberation Front participate in peace talks as an "independent group", though not as a government delegation. The US has previously insisted that the NLF could be represented in the North Vietnamese delegation as an "interested party." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), pp. 174-75.)*

6 February-- DRV Politburo member Le Duc Tho concedes over Radio Hanoi that there are "doves" within the Lao Dong Party. "A small number of comrades," he says, "have developed 'erroneous thoughts and views'": "Concerning the combat task, they have incorrectly assessed the balance of power between the enemy and us...Now they entertain subjectivism and pacifism, slacken their vigilance, and fail to get ideologically ready for combat. Now they see only difficulties and do not see opportunities; display pessimism, perplexity, and a reluctance to protracted resistance; fail to realize clearly the deceptive peace negotiation plot of the enemy; and rely on outside aid." *(Foreign Broadcasts Information Service, Daily Report, 10 February 1966.)*

8 February-- Following a meeting in Honolulu between President Johnson and South Vietnamese leaders Nguyen Van Thieu and Nguyen Cao Ky, the conferees issue "The Declaration of Honolulu", a summary of which pledges the US and RVN "--to defense against aggression, --to the work of social revolution, --to the goal of free

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self-government, --to the attack on hunger, ignorance, and disease, and --to the unending quest for peace." *(Public Papers of the Presidents, Lyndon B. Johnson, 1966 (Washington: GPO, 1967), vol 1, pp. 152-55.)*

10-12 February-- On 10 February, the DRV Foreign Ministry issues a statement sternly condemning US imperialism for calling the Honolulu conference to promote its "aggression". It promises to "fight to the end, whatever the hardships and sacrifices may be..." Two days later, the Chinese Communist authorities issue a statement supporting the North Vietnamese declaration and noting: "The 1954 Geneva agreements are the only foundation for solving the Viet Nam question. The four-point stand of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the five-part statement of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation are the concentrated embodiment of the Geneva agreements, and the crucial thing is that all US and satellite military forces must be withdrawn from southern Viet Nam and that the United States must recognize the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation as the sole legal representative of the South Vietnamese people. When putting forward its '14-point plan' not long ago, the Johnson Administration still pretended that 'the Geneva Accords would provide an adequate basis for peace in South East Asia'. But now the United States has made no mention at all of the Geneva Agreements in the 'Honolulu Declaration' and 'Communique', while its lackeys, the South Vietnamese puppets, openly denied the existence of the Geneva agreements, saying that 'South Viet Nam did not sign these agreements' and that 'it was only a military agreement for a ceasefire'..." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 7 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), pp. 110-11.)*

14 February-- Secretary of Defense McNamara appears before the Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee in support of the FY 1967 Department of Defense budget. He states that Vietnam is a test case as to whether "wars of national liberation" will succeed. He calls attention to Lin Piao's policy statement of September 1965: "Lin Piao has given us fair warning of the Chinese Communist intentions. If we have learned anything from the history of the last 30 years, we have learned that aggression feeds upon itself, and that the aggressor's appetite can never be satisfied short of complete domination." Concerning the Sino-Soviet split, he believes: "The pressure of competition from the Chinese Communists drives the Soviet leaders toward a cold war approach to foreign policy questions, leads them to give high priority to military programs and, thus, to compound further their chronic economic problems." He thinks that Hanoi remains interested in a Vietnam settlement only on its own terms but that when the DRV understands that it cannot win it will look with greater favor on negotiations.

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"In any event," he adds, "it should be clear to Hanoi that North Vietnam, after all, has much to gain from a peaceful settlement of the conflict, including (a) a cessation of bombings, (b) an easing of the tremendous drain on Hanoi's resources, (c) the withdrawal of American forces, and (d) an opportunity to benefit from multilateral efforts for economic development in the area as soon as peaceful cooperation is possible." In Laos, he says, the Communists have no intention of living up to their commitments under the 1962 Geneva Accords. He notes: "The Royal Lao Air Force has done a remarkable job in disrupting Pathet Lao/North Vietnamese logistics, attacking Communist military installations in Laos and providing close air support to the Government's ground forces." Laos will continue to need American military and economic assistance. "We intend, therefore, in response to the Prime Minister's request, to provide Laos with what it needs to carry on its struggle on both the economic and military fronts." Even though Cambodia has severed diplomatic relations with the US in May 1965, he states: "We wish to continue to avoid, if possible, any action that would preclude an improvement in relations between Cambodia and the United States or that would threaten to expand the war in South Vietnam into Cambodia. Nevertheless, we are prepared to do whatever is clearly required for the self-defense of our forces fighting in South Vietnam." *(89th Cong 2d Sess, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1967, Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives (Washington: GPO, 1966), pt 1, pp. 12-22.)*

15 February-- French President Charles de Gaulle informs Ho Chi Minh that his country is prepared to "actively take part...in exerting her influence" to end the Vietnam war "as soon as this appears possible." De Gaulle's note is in response to a letter from Ho on 24 January which asked de Gaulle to do what he could to "prevent perfidious new maneuvers" by the United States in Southeast Asia." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 176.)*

15 February-- Peking's People's Daily accuses the USSR of attempting to put the Vietnam problem into the orbit of United States—Soviet "co-operation for world domination." It claims that "[t]here do exist two diametrically opposite lines on the Viet Nam question: (1) The Vietnamese people's revolutionary line of armed struggle to resolutely resist United States aggression and save the country; and the other is, (2) The Soviet leaders' line of capitulationism by betraying the revolutionary cause of the Vietnamese people. These two lines are absolutely irreconcilable." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 7 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), p. 111.)*

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22-23 February-- On 22 February, General John P. McConnell, Air Force Chief of Staff, issues a prepared statement to the Defense Subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations. He notes that he is concerned both about potential Soviet breakthroughs in technology and in the acquisition of nuclear strike capabilities by Communist China. He states:

"A further widening of the schism between Communist China and the USSR will not necessarily reduce either their separate or combined threats to the free world. The Soviets and Communist Chinese in particular can be expected to intensify and to continue for many years to come their promotion of subversion as they are doing today in Southeast Asia. This will significantly increase the likelihood of requests to the major Western Powers for military assistance.

"In assessing the air threat that could be encountered in the future course of the Vietnam conflict, it is well to keep in mind the distinctive roles that are being played by the Soviet Union and Communist China.

"Where Soviet aid to North Vietnam is concerned, we have seen an increase in the flow of materiel in selected categories of weapons and supporting equipment during the past year. Most conspicuous has been the Soviet introduction of a substantial SA-2 missile system. The Soviets have also supplied the North Vietnamese with aircraft, radars, and possibly AAA. In addition, the Soviets have aided the North Vietnam economy with machinery and certain vital commodities such as petroleum, oil, and lubricants (POL).

"The Chinese Communists in the northeastern and northwestern parts of North Vietnam are assisting the North Vietnamese in the improvement of lines of communication and in air defense measures. The Chinese have also improved their military posture, especially their airpower, in South China.

"As we have seen, the Communist threat today includes a formidable strategic force of nuclear armed missiles and bombers together with the large conventional forces required to conduct or support limited aggression. Further, from the course of action the Communists in Southeast Asia and elsewhere are pursuing, it is clear that they can remain committed to an expansionist program aimed at world domination."

The following day, McConnell returns to tell the Subcommittee that the Soviets have pledged $600 million worth of goods and supplies to the DRV this year. *(89th Cong 2d Sess, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1967, Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives (Washington: GPO, 1966), pt 1, pp. 483, 501-02.)*

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March-- Melvin Gurtov of the Rand Corporation, in a 1967 paper entitled Hanoi on War and Peace, describes the impact of US escalation on the DRV's war strategy:

"There is little doubt that the introduction of a large number of U.S. troops into South Vietnam during 1965, to the point where the year-end total of nearly 200,000 represented a quadrupling of American combat troops involved at the year's beginning, had a major impact on North Vietnamese war planning. Prior to the increase, North Vietnamese and Viet Cong assessments confidently concluded that the long awaited 'general uprising and general offensive' could take place during 1965 and bring about final victory in a short time span. After the increase, and probably because of it, the Lao Dong Party Central Committee convened its 12th plenum (December) to determine, among other things, whether in fact protracted war remained a viable strategic alternative.

The basic decisions of the Party Central Committee have become known to us as the result of the capture during 1967 of a 'top secret' resolution issued by the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN), which is not only the leading politico-military organ of the Viet Cong, but is also the coordinator of directives from the Lao Dong Party to its 'Southern branch,' the People's Revolutionary Party (PRP). The COSVN resolution, drafted during its 4th Congress in March 1966, was clearly the product of the Central Committee session of the previous December. Consequently, we now know that the North Vietnamese decided that the overall military strategy would be to gain 'a decisive victory in a relatively short period of time,' but within the framework of protracted struggle. The strategy required that as many American and 'puppet' (GVN) forces as possible had to be put out of action; the goal set was between 30,000 and 40,000 U.S. soldiers, plus about 200,000 'puppet' troops. To achieve these ambitious aims, all three types of forces—guerrillas, regional units, and regular units—would be required as before; but guerrilla warfare was said to have the greatest potentiality 'in both causing the attrition of and the destruction of the American and puppet forces..." In contrast to Chinese advice (to judge from their newspaper commentaries on the war), the North Vietnamese found it perfectly feasible to shift back and forth between so-called phase two (guerrilla) and phase three (conventional) warfare: 'All the armed forces, from the regular forces to the regional forces, shall be responsible for participating in, assisting, and emphasizing guerrilla warfare.'

This tactical shift evidently did not change North Vietnam's overall strategic outlook. Protracted war, as already noted, was

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still considered the proper approach, especially as the United States was seen to have moved from a stage of 'special war,' where reliance was on the advisory effort, to 'limited war,' where U.S. troops would undertake a major share of the fighting. What did change in North Vietnamese thinking was the time thought necessary to win the protracted war. In sharp contrast to early 1965, the resolution now considered that the LAF were merely to be 'in preparation for a general attack and uprising which will take place when the opportunity avails itself and the situation ripens.' The quick victory which, quite legitimately, was foreseen in early 1965 could no longer be anticipated." *(Melvin Gurtov, Hanoi on War and Peace (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, P-3696, 1967), pp. 10-12.)*

March-- The COSVN resolution mentioned in the preceding entry also gives considerable insight into Hanoi's negotiating strategy: "...we are determined not to entertain any illusions concerning a negotiated settlement of the problem of Vietnam...Only when the American imperialists' aggressive will is crushed and the objectives of independence, peace, democracy, and neutrality of the South are guaranteed can we negotiate a settlement of the Vietnam problem." Evidently desirous of avoiding the fatal error of 1954 by not adequately exploiting military gains for diplomatic leverage, this document urges that political and military "struggle" proceed hand in hand so that, "[a]t a certain time, we can apply the strategy of fighting and negotiating at the same time, in order to support the armed struggle, and thus accelerate the disintegration of the puppet army and regime, and create more conditions favorable for our people to win a decisive victory." Clearly, the military "struggle" will not cease during the course of any future negotiations. *(Melvin Gurtov, Hanoi on War and Peace (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, P-3696, 1967), p. 27.)*

4 March-- Peking Review discusses the developing insurgency in Thailand: "Since 1961 when people in the northeast and the south first resorted to arms, the struggle has developed and spread to the central and western parts of the country...The contradictions between U.S. imperialism and Thai national interests and the class contradictions inside the country have become sharper...The arming of the Thailand Patriotic Front on New Year's Day 1965 is a milestone in the people's struggle. The Front, which has become the focal point for rallying all patriotic Thai forces, has brought the people's revolutionary struggle to a new high...It is the northeast, where the struggle rages most fiercely, that the Washington and Bangkok authorities are most worried about at present. In this poverty-stricken and highly strategic region, which

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accounts for one-third of the country's total area and population, U.S. imperialism has built many military bases and strategic highways to expand its aggression in Indo-China. It is here, according to the Thanom regime's own figures, that 84.62 per cent of the peasants' harvests go as land rent. Usury is rampant—the same figures reveal that the lowest interest paid by peasants in 1965 was 50 per cent, although 100 per cent was more common and rates of 200 and 300 per cent were not unknown...According to a high Bangkok official, the people's armed forces in this region have set up guerrilla bases in Nakhon Phanom, Sakon Nakhon, Udorn, Ubon and Surin Provinces. Thai papers and Western news agencies report that the rapidly growing people's armed forces frequently inflict heavy blows on the troops and police of the reactionary regime...A Reuter dispatch on January 16 indicated that the people's armed forces were most active in Sakon Nakhon Province. It also reported that military and civilian officials there 'eat and sleep in fear' and that 'they sense that they are surrounded by unseen enemies'...Taking a leaf from Washington's south Vietnam book, Deputy Interior Minister Thawin announced on January 24 that the Thai cabinet had approved a plan for moving inhabitants out of the 'dangerous places' into 'independent villages' (another name for 'strategic hamlets') to be set up. Four days earlier, Prime Minister Thanom disclosed the establishment of a 'special command' composed of the army and police for the suppression of the people's forces...Interior Minister Praphas told a meeting of 'the territorial defence volunteers units' (police reserves) late in January that his ministry had decided to station a 'territorial defence volunteers unit' in every one of the 37 frontier provinces and to install 'intelligence units' in 24 frontier districts as a means of helping the regular troops suppress the people's forces...However, despite such efforts by the Thanom regime and the help of Washington, the people's struggle goes on unchecked." *("Armed Struggle Develops in Thailand", Peking Review, IX, no. 10 (4 March 1966), pp. 23-24.)*

10 March-- Before the House Committee on Armed Services, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara is asked about the need to check the flow of war materiel into Hanoi. He says: "The amount of materiel going in by ship from the Soviet Union is very, very small—and has been very, very small...It is not playing a major role in the support of the North Vietnamese infiltration of South Vietnam at the present time...I don't want to state what my recommendation would be on mining Haiphong. I think it depends on the situation at any given moment. At this particular moment, I don't believe it would be wise. The amount of war materiel, particularly from the Soviet Union, going in there by sea is very small. The effect of stopping that flow on the

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infiltration of men and equipment into the South would be negligible at this time." *(89th Cong 2d Sess, Hearings on Military Posture...before the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives (Washington: GPO, 1966), p. 7596.)*

11 March-- The Chinese People's Republic Foreign Ministry follows the DRV, the NLF and North Korea in condemning South Korean President Pak Jung Hi's decision to send 20,000 more troops to South Vietnam. The CPR Foreign Ministry statement notes that "[s]ince U.S. imperialism has increasingly joined together its battlelines of aggression against the Asian peoples, the peoples of Vietnam, Korea, China and other Asian countries, who are in the forefront of the struggle against U.S. aggression, have no choice but to further strengthen their unity and support and help each other for the thorough defeat of the U.S. aggressors." *(Text in Peking Review, IX, no. 12 (18 March 1966), pp. 6-7.)*

13-24 March-- On 13 March, the NLF issues a statement condemning American use of toxic chemicals and poison gas in South Vietnam. On 22 March, the DRV also protests these actions and two days later China follows suit. *(Text of Chinese Foreign Ministry Statement in Peking Review, IX, no. 14 (1 April 1966), p. 16.)*

15 March-- Truong Chinh, DRV Politburo member and Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly, speaks to the 11th session of the Central Committee of the North Vietnamese Fatherland Front. He states that in order to achieve the goal of defeating US aggression, "our people must firmly grasp the general strategic line of fighting a protracted war and mainly relying on our own forces. Because we oppose the weak to the strong, we have to carry out a protracted fight. Along with relying on our own forces, we must make the fullest use of the assistance of the fraternal countries and the peace-loving people in the world...At the same time, we must grasp well the motto of combining armed struggle with political struggle." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 9 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), pp. 16-17.)*

17 March-- An article in the DRV armed forces journal Quan Doi Nhan Dan by Lieutenant-General Van Tien Dung examines the political and military factors necessary for victory:

"...in examining the factors of military superiority one is wrong if one sees only purely military factors and not the direct or indirect influence of political factors, if one counts only the number of soldiers, rifles, planes, and guns and not the role of politics and morale. This attitude is contrary to the views of historic materialism and to the views of proletarian military science.

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The just war and absolute political superiority of our people are the basic objective factors for creating and developing military superiority...

The US military power in South Viet Nam is only a limited one. The Americans are not free to send to South Viet Nam as many troops as possible, pour into the South Vietnamese battlefield as much money as possible, and prolong the war as long as possible. Our people do not have to face the entire military power of the US imperialists...

...If the Americans continue to send more troops to prolong and enlarge the war, they will face much greater political turmoil in their country and the world. The more the US troops are exterminated and the heavier the load imposed upon the US people by the war over a longer period, the higher the antiwar movement of the US people will become and the deeper the differences among the US authorities will become. The war rear of the US troops will be further weakened. The puppet authorities will be closely bound to the wheel of aggression of the US troops. As they are disintegrated by large portions, the puppet forces will be unable to rise to their feet. As they fall into an increasingly passive state in all fields, the Americans will be unable to find a way out. Their aggressive intentions will be strongly criticised.

It is crystal clear that the most decisive factor in the base for creating military superiority is the political factor, which is decided by the nature of the war. The military domain is dependent upon politics more directly and deeply than any other domain...

The southern forces and people have weaknesses in the material and technical areas, but they have basic strong points in the political field, and these strong points are the main base for creating military superiority. The war of the southern forces and people in particular and of our people in both zones in general is a just war. That is why we have absolute political superiority—a superiority which is developing daily...

...War history of the world has demonstrated that in a just war when the people have transformed absolute political superiority into military superiority, and when this military superiority of the people has appeared on the battlefield, it can do nothing but grow strongly without interruption and the people's prospects of final success have been indicated in the actual facts.

Of course, our people's war will continue to be very fierce and cruel because the Americans are powerful and very stubborn and savage arch-imperialists. To date, their aggressive will has not yet been smashed." *(Department of External Affairs,*

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Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 9 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), pp. 17-18.)

17 March-- Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs William P. Bundy, just returned from Thailand, tells the Zablocki Subcommittee of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, that the Chinese Communists are sponsoring the insurgency in Thailand: "They are apparently using exclusively agents trained in schools in China in a large number of schools that are now teaching the Thai language and subversive techniques. These agents are being introduced into Thailand by devious means, drawing in some cases on people in northeast Thailand for help." He also states that the Chinese supplied arms by covert means to the Indonesian Communist Party. Regarding the relationship between Peking and Hanoi, he says: "In the last analysis, I believe, neither Peiping nor Moscow is in a position to dictate to Hanoi; Hanoi is capable of making ultimate decisions on its own." He also says that Peking would be very sensitive to attacks on China and would "respond quite drastically." Moreover, the Chinese would be "extremely sensitive if they came to the belief that our actions against North Vietnam were in fact aimed at toppling the regime or conquering the country. That is a subjective judgment on their part. It depends on a total picture of what our actions amount to in their minds. It has to do with the kind of actions we take, the pace of those actions, with the relationship of these actions to a valid military objective in relation to the struggle within South Vietnam—the cutting off of supplies, and other related matters. All of these things are constantly being judged by them." *(89th Cong 2d Sess, United States Policy toward Asia, Hearings before the Subcommittee on the Far East and the Pacific of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives (Washington: GPO, 1966), pt 2, pp. 543-44, 554-55.)*

22 March-- The West German newspaper Die Welt publishes a letter reportedly written by the Soviet Communist Party's Central Committee to the East European parties. The letter says that Communist China's leadership is trying to use the Vietnam question to create military conflict between the USSR and the United States. It states: "The Soviet Union delivers large amounts of weapons to the DRV, including rocket installations, anti-aircraft artillery, airplanes, tanks, coastal guns, warships and other items. In 1965 alone, weapons and other material worth about 500 million rubles [$550 million] were placed at the disposal of the DRV. The DRV is receiving support in the training of pilots, rocket personnel, tank drivers, artillery men and so on. Our military aid is being rendered to the extent the Vietnamese leadership thinks necessary." The letter goes

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on to say that the Chinese have refused to participate in united action in support of the DRV. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 181.)*

25 March-- The New York Times reports that Prince Norodom Sihanouk has announced that the Soviet Union has offered new and "very great" military aid to Cambodia. *(New York Times, 26 March 1966, p. 2.)*

Spring 1966-- French journalist and editor Rene Dabernat says in an interview in U.S. News & World Report (15 January 1967) that Communist China had informed the United States through Paris in the Spring of 1966 that it would not become involved in the Vietnam war if the US refrained from invading China or the DRV and from bombing North Vietnam's Red River dikes. Dabernat says that statements by President Johnson and other American officials demonstrates that they have "agreed to these conditions." The State Department replies with a "no comment" to this claim, but officials acknowledge that the United States has received a number of messages from China through a number of different third parties. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 216.)*

29 March-9 April-- Moscow pulls a diplomatic coup in the midst of the Sino-Soviet split by securing the presence of North Korea, North Vietnam and the NLF at the 23rd Congress of the Soviet Communist Party. In Moscow, both Lao Dong Secretary-General Le Duan and the NLF representative (who is tactfully not referred to as "Comrade") thank the Soviets for their material and moral support. Both of them, but especially Le Duan, hint at the need for more Soviet aid and a more militant position vis-a-vis the United States. Le Duan states: "The only correct line at present [is] unity of all revolutionary forces in order to frustrate the aggressive political course of the imperialists headed by the United States, to force them to retreat step by step to wrest from them one position after another." To the majority of delegates attending, however, moral and material aid short of a dangerous confrontation with the US apparently constituted the proper response. *(Adam B. Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), pp. 725-28.)*

April-- The Soviet-oriented international journal World Marxist Review scans the growth of public opposition to the Vietnam war throughout the world. It notes that the war "is leading to a serious polarization of forces in the United States. Whereas formerly opposition to the war of aggression was confined to individual actions by progressives against the policy pursued by the Johnson Administration, today protests are heard in Congress

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as well as in the streets. The numerous days of protest held at the end of March in cities throughout the United States show that public opinion is on the march." *(Jan Prazsky, "The Consequences of Escalation in Vietnam", World Marxist Review, IX, no. 4 (April 1966), p. 73.)*

8 April-- A DRV Hoc Tap editorial reiterates the 4-point plan of 8 April 1965 and states: "All proposals the US imperialists have put forward so far for a discussion of the Viet Nam problem, including the fourteen-point communique of the White House...boil down to the one single theme: The US imperialists will stay in South Viet Nam. The US imperialists have consistently and stubbornly refused to recognize the right of the Vietnamese people to decide themselves their own affairs... The US imperialists' policy of aggression is the direct cause of the war in Viet Nam. To end the war in Viet Nam, the US imperialists must give up their policy of aggression, withdraw all US and satellite troops from South Viet Nam and at the same time stop for good and unconditionally all acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam...The US imperialists have been clamouring that they sincerely desire peace, yet they refuse to recognize the NFLSV as the only genuine representative of the South Vietnamese people and refuse to enter into negotiations with the Front...By planning to discuss the question of cessation of hostilities in South Viet Nam—a question which comes fully under the competence of the South Vietnamese people and their Liberation Front—with the DRV Government the US imperialists cunningly pursue a double aim: to deny the role of the NFLSV and slander the DRV as committing aggression against South Viet Nam. This cunning move ...proved that the US imperialists have not the slightest desire to enter into serious discussions, but are only putting up a peace negotiations smokescreen to cover up their plot of stepping up their war of aggression...But as long as the Vietnamese people have not won complete independence there can be no genuine peace in their country, and so long as the US aggressive army remains in Viet Nam the Vietnamese people will resist it with determination." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 9 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), pp. 22-24.)*

9 April-- The 23rd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which assembled in Moscow on 29 March, issues a statement condemning the "brutal aggression" of the US in Vietnam. It declares:

"...The Soviet Union, the other socialist countries and the international working-class and communist movement have always rendered, and now render, the Vietnamese people extensive and versatile help and support. On behalf of the whole party, of

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all Soviet people, the 23rd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union firmly demands that the U.S. aggression against Viet Nam be stopped and all interventionist troops be withdrawn from that country. Any continuation of this aggression, which the U.S. militarists are also trying to spread to other South-East Asian countries, is fraught with most dangerous consequences for world peace.

The Congress earnestly declares: in 'escalating' the disgraceful war against the people of Viet Nam, the aggressors will encounter continuously increasing support of Viet Nam by the Soviet Union and its other socialist friends and brothers...

The 23rd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union considers that the Vietnamese question can be solved only through the recognition of the just demands of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the National Liberation Front of South Viet Nam: the United States must forthwith cease bombing the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and its other aggressive acts against the DRV...the Armed Forces of the United States and its allies must be withdrawn from the territory of South Viet Nam...the National Liberation Front of South Viet Nam must be recognised as the sole lawful representative of the South Vietnamese population...the U.S. Government must cease any and all interference in the internal affairs of Viet Nam and undeviatingly observe the 1954 Geneva Agreements.

The 23rd Congress...solemnly declares its fraternal solidarity with [the DRV]...and calls on all Communist and Workers' Parties to work still more persistently for united action in the struggle against the US aggression in Viet Nam and in rendering effective aid and support to the fighting Vietnamese people.

It has never been more important than now for the socialist countries and all Communist Parties to show their sense of internationalist responsibility to the full extent and to join together in united actions, rallying all progressive, democratic and peace-loving forces to their side in order to stop the imperialist aggression..." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 9 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), pp. 24-25.)*

10 April-- Premier Chou En-lai, in a Peking radio broadcast, issues a quite moderate 4-point statement of warning to the US:

"1. China will not take the initiative to provoke a war with the United States. China has not sent any troops to Taiwan. It is the United States that has occupied China's territory of Taiwan Province. Nevertheless, China has been making efforts in

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demanding through negotiations that the United States withdraw all its armed forces from Taiwan and the Taiwan Straits, and she has held talks with the United States for more than ten years, first in Geneva and then in Warsaw on this question of principle, which admits of no concession whatsoever. All this serves as a very good proof.

2. The Chinese mean what they say. In other words, if any country in Asia or elsewhere meets with aggression by the Imperialists headed by the United States, the Chinese Government and people definitely will give it support and help. Should such just action bring on U.S. aggression against China, we will unhesitantly rise in resistance and fight to the end.

3. China is prepared. Should the United States impose a war on China it can be said with certainty that once in China, the United States would not be able to pull out, however many men it may send over and whatever weapons it may use, nuclear weapons included. Since the 14,000,000 people of Southern Viet Nam can cope with over 200,000 US troops, the 650,000,000 people of China can undoubtedly cope with 10,000,000 of them. No matter how many US aggressor troops may come they will certainly be wiped out in China.

4. Once the war breaks out, it will have no boundaries. Some US strategists want to bombard China by relying on air and naval superiority and avoiding ground war. This is wishful thinking. Once the war gets started with air or sea action, it will not be for the United States alone to decide how the war will continue. If you can come from the sky, why can't we fight back on the ground. That is why we say the war will have no boundaries once it breaks out." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 9 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), pp. 25-26.)*

11 April-- The Viet Cong Radio Liberation comments on the disorders spreading through Da Nang, Hue, Saigon and other South Vietnamese cities: "For nearly a month, especially since the beginning of April, a major political problem has arisen in South Viet Nam, driving the US imperialists crazy and shaking the present reactionary Government in Saigon. This is the movement of the South Vietnamese urban people, who have risen up in co-ordination with the side-ranging struggle of the people throughout South Viet Nam against the US imperialist aggressors and the Vietnamese traitors Thieu-Ky to demand the essential rights of national independence, democracy, and people's livelihood. During the development of this ever stronger, clearer, and more desperate and extensive movement, an outstanding factor has emerged: except for the Vietnamese traitors, the different strata

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of urban people who are conducting the struggle have asserted that those whom they must concentrate their efforts to strike down at any cost are the US imperialist aggressors and their running dogs...At present, the anti-US spirit is the principal ideological tide in South Viet Nam..." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 9 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), p. 26.)*

16-22 April-- Ho Chi Minh delivers a speech to the National Assembly, third session, third legislature. He takes note of the urban turmoil in the South and states that the Americans are attempting to extricate themselves from their increasing difficulties and defensive position by expanding the air war against the DRV. Ho says that the bombing attack will not break the people's will to fight back: "So far, 973 American planes have been shot down and a number of American pilots captured...We should live and work on a war-footing. We should strive to defend and build North Vietnam into a stronghold, and...support the struggle for the liberation of South Vietnam, thereby fulfilling our obligations as the bigger rear that North Vietnam is toward the bigger front—South Vietnam." He reiterates that the "only correct solution" to the war has been expounded in his 24 January message to Heads of State and the 5-point statement of the NLF (22 March 1965). *(Ho Chi Minh, "Speech in the National Assembly, Third Session, Third Legislature", Against U.S. Aggression, For National Salvation (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1967), pp. 121-28.)*

20 April-- Nguyen Thi Binh, member of the Central Committee of the National Liberation Front, notes in a speech that the 23rd Congress of the CPSU has "paid special attention" to the Vietnam problem: "However, in the face of the present serious situation and to provide the South Vietnamese people with more favourable fighting conditions and to isolate further the US imperialists, aid and support from various nations in the world for the Vietnamese people should be strengthened very vigorously in the material, political and spiritual fields. In this respect we warmly welcome the CPSU's statement on US aggression in Viet Nam, we are convinced that this important statement by the CPSU will mark a new step in the movement to support and side with the South Vietnamese people..." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 9 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), p. 27.)*

21 April-- Soviet Minister of Defense Marshal Rodion Malinovsky, in a speech while in Hungary, claims that assistance to the Vietnamese people could be rendered even more effective if the Chinese leaders did not hamper aid shipments travelling overland through China to North Vietnam. *(Donald S. Zagoria, Vietnam Triangle (New York: Pegasus, 1967), p. 204.)*

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25 April-- Professor John K. Galbraith, US Ambassador to India under the Kennedy Administration, tells the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that he does not fear that a US policy of accommodation in South Vietnam would jeopardize Thailand. He makes the following observation: "...I don't think the question really arises in Thailand...because this is a stable country, where there has been very little indigenous insurrection, there is no sizable Communist Party. The history has been very, very different from that of the much more troubled and contentious Indochinese states. So I would think that there would be less danger, perhaps relatively little danger of the Communists getting any serious foothold in Thailand. One cannot, of course, be sure." *(89th Cong 2d Sess, Foreign Assistance, 1966, Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, on S. 2859 and S. 2861 (Washington: GPO, 1966), pp. 247-48.)*

30 April-- President Liu Shao-chi and Premier Chou En-lai attack US imperialism and Soviet revisionism in speeches. Chou declares: "Giving full play to the enormous power of people's war, the Vietnamese people have grown ever stronger in the course of fighting and have won tremendous victories, thus effectively tying down and reducing the strength of US imperialism and supporting and assisting the revolutionary struggles of all other peoples...In order to extricate itself from its predicament on the Viet Nam question, US imperialism is actively resorting to counter-revolutionary dual tactics. On the one hand, it is rapidly escalating the war in an attempt to subdue the Vietnamese people by armed force; on the other, it is frenziedly playing the trick of 'peace talks' in a vain attempt to gain what it has not been able to win on the battlefield...The Chinese people...firmly support the four-point stand of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the five-point statement of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation...To whatever extent US imperialism may widen the war and whatever the cost we may have to pay, the Chinese people will, together with the Albanian people and other revolutionary peoples of the world, give all-out support and assistance to the Vietnamese people..." With regard to the Soviet role in Vietnam, the Premier notes that "the leading group of the CPSU has in the past year and more given Viet Nam some aid, but it is both meagre in quantity and poor in quality. Soviet aid to Viet Nam is in no way genuine support to the Vietnamese people's struggle against US aggression...but is designed to bring this struggle into the orbit of 'US-Soviet collaboration.' Since February last year, the leading group of the CPSU has never stopped its behind-the-scenes activities for peace talks. Moreover, it has repeatedly spread rumours slandering China as hampering the transit of Soviet aid materials to Viet Nam, in an attempt to sow discord between China and Viet Nam and to undermine the unity of the Chinese and Vietnamese peoples against US imperialism. While professing

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'aid to Vietnam against US aggression,' the leading group of the CPSU is actually using its aid to Viet Nam to attack China and is helping US imperialism to stamp out the flames of revolution of the Vietnamese people." President Liu adds: "...Marxist-Leninists and all revolutionary people of the world are "duty bound to render firm support and assistance to the Vietnamese people in carrying on their struggle against U.S. aggression...and must not take any 'united action' with the modern revisionists on the Vietnam question and help them deceive the people and sell out the Vietnamese people's revolutionary cause." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 9 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), pp. 30-31; Text of Liu Shao-chi's speech in Peking Review, IX, no. 19 (6 May 1966), p. 9.)*

April 1966-April 1967-- During this period, Peking on ten separate occasions accuses the US of infringing upon, and in some cases causing damage to, the territory and property of the Chinese people. While each of these incursions is labeled a "serious war provocation," a further expansion of the conflict in Vietnam, and a particular threat to the People's Republic, the frenzied warnings of 1965 contained in the speeches of Chen Yi and Lin Piao, as well as in the editorials of the People's Daily, are now clearly toned down. Peking seems content to issue warnings, as in the past, of Chinese preparedness to meet any war imposed on them, of future repayment of the "debt of blood" incurred by the United States, and of the certainty that a Sino-American war would have no boundaries. *(See, e.g., "Commentator's" editorial in Jenmin Jih Pao (People's Daily), 22 September 1966.)*

May-- Le Duan, writing in the Soviet-oriented international journal World Marxist Review, reiterates the 4 and 5-point plans of the DRV and NLF. He states: "Ours will be a long and bitter struggle. But we are confident that the support of the Soviet Union, China and the other fraternal countries of the socialist camp and the peoples of the world will enable our people to achieve final victory...[T]he fight for world peace is the prime task of the Communist and Workers' parties. At the same time it is necessary to press forward the revolution for the emancipation of the working people and all oppressed peoples. These two tasks are closely interlinked and should be carried out simultaneously, which is the only way to stay the criminal hand of the imperialists in this or that area and prevent them from starting a world war. Hence the only correct line today is to unite all the revolutionary forces in order to frustrate the aggressive policies of the imperialists headed by the USA, force them to retreat step by step, and wrest from them one position after another. This is the only way to thwart

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their schemes and actions aimed at unleashing war, the only way to preserve world peace." *(Text of Le Duan's statement in World Marxist Review, IX, no. 5 (May 1966), pp. 6-7.)*

3 May-- The Chinese Foreign Ministry issues a statement replying to Soviet Minister of Defense Malinovsky's charge of 21 April. It states:

"Malinovsky is a liar. China has never hampered the transit of Soviet aid materials to Vietnam. All military aid materials which Vietnam asked for and which the Soviet Union asked China to forward have been transported to Vietnam by China with priority, at high speed and free of charge. From February 1965 when the Soviet Union asked for the sending of its aid materials to Vietnam through China up to the end of 1965, China transported a total of 43,000 odd tons of Soviet military aid supplies to Vietnam. The Vietnamese Government is well aware of this. And so is the Soviet Government...

Both in quantity and quality, the aid the Soviet Union gives to Vietnam is far from commensurate with its strength. It should have been easy for a big power like the Soviet Union to provide Vietnam with several hundred thousand tons of military supplies. But it has only given a few tens of thousands of tons, a deplorably meagre amount. It must be further pointed out that most of the Soviet supplies consisted of old weapons of its own armed forces, which had been replaced and which even included some that were worn-out and of no use at all. True, the Soviet Union has also given Vietnam some weapons of comparatively new types, but even these are already outmoded. As for those of truly good quality, the Soviet Union either does not supply them or is unwilling to supply them in large quantities. This state of affairs is definitely not due to any hindrance on the part of China. How can the blame be laid at the door of China when the Soviet Union is simply unwilling to supply good things in large quantities? Take, for instance, the first quarter of this year. For this period the Soviet Union asked us to earmark a transport capacity of 1,730 wagons. We agreed and readied the wagons. However, the actual Soviet delivery was only 556 wagon-loads...

As is well known, in Khrushchev's days the Soviet Union refused to aid Vietnam. The new leaders of the Soviet Union put up the signboard of aiding Vietnam when they took over. Some people think that the leading group of the Soviet Union has really changed, but the change in fact is only in method and tactics. Both Khrushchev's no aid for Vietnam and the new Soviet leaders' aid for Vietnam are aimed at controlling the Vietnam situation and bringing the Vietnamese people's struggle against U.S.

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aggression and for national salvation into the orbit of 'U.S.-Soviet collaboration.' Therefore, the new leaders of the Soviet Union hastily began to engineer so-called peace talks behind the back of Vietnam to meet the needs of U.S. imperialism, even before the first batch of their promised aid materials arrived in Vietnam last year.

The Soviet leading group knows that to serve U.S. imperialism it must first of all sow discord between China and Vietnam and undermine the unity of the Chinese and Vietnamese peoples against U.S. imperialism. In the past year or more, the Soviet Union has been making use of the question of its aid to Vietnam to attack China. Its aid to Vietnam has been scanty, but the rumours it spread slandering China have been numerous. For a time the method used by the Soviet leading group in serving the United States has indeed become a little more covert owing to the constant exposures by China and by all Marxist-Leninists of the world, but its behind-the-scenes activities have never stopped.

At its 23rd Congress, the leading group of the C.P.S.U. assumed a posture for unity against imperialism, and not a few people unaware of the truth thought that it was sincere. Now, everybody can see that this was mere pretence. In reality, at the 23rd Congress the leading group of the C.P.S.U. still employed the dual tactics of sham opposition but real capitulation to imperialism, sham revolution but real betrayal, and sham unity but real split...

As a soldier, Malinovsky ought to know that besides ground and air communications there are sea routes to link various countries in the world. It is utterly groundless to say that aid cannot be rendered in the absence of a common boundary." *(Donald S. Zagoria, Vietnam Triangle (New York: Pegasus, 1967), pp. 204-06.)*

5 May-- China's People's Daily reveals that Soviet Foreign Minister A. A. Gromyko "had an unusual secret talk with the Pope on the Viet Nam question right after the recent twenty-third CPSU Congress. No sooner had the Soviet Foreign Minister stepped out of the door of the Vatican than US 'Ambassador' Henry Cabot Lodge stepped into the same door. What is cooking is self-evident. On the question of Viet Nam, the Soviet modern revisionists have uttered some sweet-sounding words...But what they have been conscientiously doing is to coordinate with the US imperialists counter-revolutionary dual tactic and peddle the 'peace talks' formula of the Johnson Administration in an attempt to stamp out the raging revolutionary fire of the Vietnamese people and to betray their fundamental interests." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 9 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), pp. 35-36.)*

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5 May-- Radio Moscow broadcasts a review of Soviet aid to the DRV with major emphasis on North Vietnamese statements of gratitude for this assistance. It concludes that the USSR "has given and will continue to give all-sided assistance to Vietnam. It unswervingly fights for the united action of socialist countries and all revolutionary forces in the struggle against US aggression in Viet Nam with a view to providing effective assistance to the fighting Vietnamese people." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 9 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), pp. 36-38.)*

5 May-- Peking during this period was becoming increasingly unhappy with DRV vacillation on the basic issues of the Sino-Soviet dispute. It could occasionally criticize Hanoi; it could not, however, substantially reduce its aid or apply other sanctions—Vietnam had become too important to be abandoned. Teng Hsiao-ping, General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, at a mess rally in Shanghai during the visit of a high-level Albanian delegation, condemns the "opportunist attitude" of certain unspecified Communist parties towards revolution: "There can be no middle of the road in the struggle between Marxism-Leninism and revisionism. Only when Marxist-Leninists are free from vacillation in all circumstances can they lead the cause of revolution to final victory." While the main target of this attack was explicitly the Soviet Union, Hanoi may have also been implicated. *(Text in Peking Review, IX, no. 20 (13 May 1966), p. 18.)*

9-20 May-- On 9 May, the Chinese detonate a "nuclear explosion containing thermonuclear material." Peking Review, on 20 May, claims that the blast has "caused panic among the imperialists, U.S. imperialists in particular, the modern revisionists and all other reactionaries on earth." It also reports that the DRV and the NLF (among other parties) have extended their "warmest congratulations". *("China's Nuclear Test Inspires the Oppressed Peoples in Their Struggle for Liberation!", Peking Review, IX, no. 21 (20 May 1966), pp. 30-31.)*

June-- The Soviet-oriented international journal World Marxist Review scans the situation in Vietnam: "A striking expression of the decadence of the Ky regime is the decline in the morale of its armed forces. In 1965 more than 50 battalions totalling more than 200,000 men were smashed by the liberation forces. Most of them surrendered or deserted...One of the main objects of the sharp increase in U.S. armed forces in South Vietnam and the intensified bombing of the DRV was to prevent the demoralization of the Saigon army. But this move had the opposite effect.

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The demoralization of the puppet forces continues. The facts show that the steady increase in the number of U.S. troops is causing more and more South Vietnamese to accept the slogans of the National Liberation Front and to see on whose side and against whom they ought to fight." Its analysis of the Front and its activities is standard:

"...the Front is the mass organization of the national liberation movement of South Vietnam which unites all the democratic forces, parties and socio-political organizations representing the widest cross-section of the population. In its documents the Front has repeatedly declared its readiness to cooperate with any individual, party or religious organization pursuing the same goals. The aim of the Front is to put an end to the imperialist intervention, set up a national and democratic government that would ensure peace, freedom, democracy, neutrality and, subsequently, the peaceful reunion of the entire country. It is these aims that bourgeois propaganda seeks to conceal or distort with its talk about the 'Vietcong' and the 'Reds.' The People's Revolutionary Party, the counterpart of the Party of Working People of Vietnam in the North, is but one of the many organizations which go to make up the NLF. The latter controls about 80 per cent of the territory of South Vietnam...

The liberation movement is a combination of political and armed struggle. This was strikingly manifested in the decisive phase of the struggle which led to the collapse of the enemy's plans to create 'strategic villages'. At one time the U.S. interventionists and Ngo Din Diem managed to fence off 8,000 of these villages, but today less than one quarter of them remain. The rest was abolished by the combined efforts of the local population and the liberation forces. This became possible mainly because the population agreed wholeheartedly with the stand adopted by the Front which opposed this plan and explained its true meaning to the people. The explanatory work conducted by the Front frequently had its effect on the troops of the Saigon puppets as well.

After liberation, the inhabitants of the 'strategic' villages settled scores with their captors and set up democratic organs of power in the areas which, under Front leadership, introduced a number of democratic reforms, including an agrarian reform. The National Liberation Front turned over more than two million hectares of land to the peasants in the liberated areas.

The influence of the Front is not limited to the liberated areas. Since the frontiers between the liberated and non-liberated areas are frequently very fluid, members of the Front are able to

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organize mass actions against the local puppet and occupation authorities in districts temporarily controlled by the latter."

With regard to the US bombing attacks on the North, the journal admits that the "economy of the DRV is developing along planned socialist lines. It goes without saying that this development is not unaffected by the U.S. aggression. In the circumstances it is obviously impossible for all the targets to be achieved...The U.S. aggression has necessitated decentralizing industry and the entire economy. The evacuation and re-location of capacities has naturally hindered development, as has the induction into the armed forces of a large number of men. But the people are tackling these problems with the same energy and initiative that marks the liberation struggle in the South." Quoting DRV Premier Pham Van Dong, the article refers to President Ho's letter to the Heads of State of 24 January: "If the United States really wants a peaceful settlement, it must recognize the four-point stand of the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and prove this by actual deeds; it must end unconditionally and for good all bombing raids and other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Only in this way can a political solution of the Vietnamese problem be envisaged." It comments:

"Thus the assertion that the DRV rules out negotiations as a means of solving the issue are without any foundation. As regards negotiations, the question is: *What negotiations and on what conditions?*

The United States declares that it is willing to negotiate 'unconditionally.' But this is merely a clumsy subterfuge. Its proposals contain one very important condition, namely, that the negotiations must be conducted on the basis of recognition of the legitimacy of the U.S. aggression against the Vietnamese people, which means ignoring the proposals contained in the Geneva agreements—in other words, on the basis of equal recognition of the rights of the aggressor and his victim.

But no one has the right to expect the Vietnamese people to recognize the U.S. aggression as 'legal' and thereby repudiate their right of sovereignty and national unity, a right internationally recognized in 1954.

In reply to the U.S. proposals for 'unconditional' talks, the DRV openly and clearly demanded de facto recognition of the

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principles of the Geneva Agreements. In its four-point proposal it justly notes that there can be no question of any legitimacy of the aggression or ignoring of rights internationally recognized in Geneva.

In point of fact the demands contained in the DRV proposals are even narrower than those set forth in the Geneva Agreements. No time limit is set on any procedure for the national reunion of Vietnam. The proposals are concerned solely with the question of negotiations for the achievement of this goal.

Imperialist propaganda is also trying to mislead public opinion as regards the road to peace indicated by the DRV by alleging that the latter's proposals rule out any talks until the last U.S. soldier leaves Vietnam. But the United States has no right to dictate conditions to Vietnam. And it is only natural that the immediate withdrawal of the U.S. troops from Vietnam should be the condition and principal aim of negotiations. Anything else would be a breach of the Geneva Agreements." *(Jan Prazsky, "Notes From Hanoi", World Marxist Review, IX, no. 6 (June 1966), pp. 75-78.)*

20 June-- In response to a question at a UN Correspondents Association luncheon, Secretary-General U Thant says that he has proposed three steps to bring about a situation conducive to negotiations: "Firstly, the cessation of the bombing of North Viet-Nam; secondly, the scaling down by all parties of all military activities in South Viet-Nam, which alone could lead to the bringing about of a cease-fire; and thirdly, the willingness by all sides to enter into discussions with those who are actually fighting." *(Richard P. Stebbins, ed., Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1966 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1964), pp. 227-28.)*

30 June-- In a letter to the President of the UN Security Council, US Ambassador Arthur Goldberg states that the previous day, after consulting the GVN, the United States had sent aircraft to attack the largest DRV petroleum facilities located near Hanoi and Haiphong. This action was considered necessary because of "a substantial increase in the level of infiltration of armed men and war supplies from North Viet Nam into South Viet Nam—an increase in which petroleum products have been a key factor." He states that enemy truck movements into South Vietnam have doubled during the first five months of 1966 (compared to the same period in 1965), that the daily tonnage of supplies moved overland has increased 150 percent and the infiltration of personnel by 120 percent (as compared with 1965 averages), and that the rate of infiltration of DRV military personnel into the South is estimated to have increased by more

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than 100 percent compared to the previous year. North Vietnam has increased all-weather roads into the South, obviously intending to make use of truck traffic. He explains the limits placed on the petroleum attacks as follows: "In recent attacks on petroleum facilities, every effort has been made to prevent harm to civilians and to avoid destruction of non-military facilities. The petroleum facilities attacked were located away from the population centers of both Hanoi and Haiphong. The pilots were carefully instructed to take every precaution so that only military targets would be hit. Moreover, to assure accuracy, the attacks have been scheduled only under weather conditions permitting clear visual sighting." *(Richard P. Stebbins, ed., Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1966 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1967), pp. 228-30.)*

30 June-- The DRV Foreign Ministry issues a statement announcing: "On 29 and 30 June 1966, US planes coming in several waves attacked the periphery of Hanoi and the city of Haiphong, bombing populated areas and economic establishments...This is a new step made by the US imperialists in the escalation of their aggressive war against the DRV...The DRV Government and the Vietnamese people earnestly call on the governments and peoples of the socialist countries, the peace-loving and justice-loving countries in the world to extend continued vigorous support and assistance to the Vietnamese people's patriotic struggle, to sternly condemn the US imperialists, and to take resolute action with a view to stopping their aggressive war." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 9 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), pp. 53-54.)*

mid-1966-- Writing in 1966, Douglas Pike, in his study of the Viet Cong, discusses the "general design of NLF goals and the parameters of those goals." These appear to be as follows:

"1. To achieve operative political control of South Vietnam; a willingness, but reluctance, to settle for some political power rather than all if it were clearly demonstrated that the alternative to some political power was either stalemate or total defeat.

2. To seek a South Vietnamese governmental policy of nonalignment in foreign affairs (but under a definition that would classify the DRV as domestic rather than foreign), one that in operational terms would permit the reduction of American troops in exchange for the withdrawal of PAVN forces from South Vietnam but with the proviso that this arrangement must be agreeable to the DRV.

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3. To work for reunification of the two Vietnams through a step-by-step process, the time limits of which would be negotiable.

4. To forge a broad base of world support, one principally rooted in Communist-bloc nations and not tied too closely with any one foreign country. (Again, in NLF terms, relations with the DRV would be internal, not external.)

5. To vilify the United States, mobilize world opinion against it, and heighten its feelings of frustration and futility in its efforts in South Vietnam.

6. To exploit every American and GVN weakness abroad regardless of how insignificant or transient any instance might appear to be.

7. With respect to the Sino-Soviet split, to contribute what little it could to healing the breach but not be forced into a position where it had to choose sides.

8. With respect to the DRV, to prevent itself from being submerged by Hanoi and to retain a bargaining position. Undoubtedly a schism existed: The majority of the politically acute NLF supporters realized that Northern and Southern interests were not identical. The cadres and the PRP members within the NLF shared the DRV goals; they grew progressively stronger and virtually monopolized the hierarchy by 1965. The most divisive issue in this respect was reunification. The indigenous elements maintained that reunification meant annexation by the DRV and at any rate was opposed by too many forces within and outside of Vietnam ever to be possible; the loyalists maintained, as did the DRV, that reunification must remain the central long-range goal.

9. To strive for the withdrawal of American forces from South Vietnam, based on the calculation that the United States could be persuaded to accept a coalition neutral government if its position in South Vietnam became sufficiently untenable.

10. To avoid a "negotiated settlement" at an international conference on the ground that it would almost certainly amount to a sellout of the NLF. (But this did not preclude acceptance, as a tactic, of a coalition government.) In the event that a negotiated settlement might be required because complete victory was impossible or because outright defeat was a growing prospect, the conditions it hoped to achieve included (a) an authentic coalition government that would include elements of the NLF at the cabinet level; (b) an understanding that

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South Vietnam would pursue a nonaligned but China-leaning foreign policy on the model of Cambodia; (c) closer economic ties with the DRV; (d) amnesty for its followers, or opportunity for them to move to the DRV; and (e) withdrawal of most, but not necessarily all, American military forces." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), pp. 370-71.)*

July-- World Marxist Review publishes a speech delivered at the 13th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia by DRV Politburo member Le Duc Tho. Tho notes that US escalation has changed the nature of the struggle in Vietnam from a "special war" to a "local war". He comments on the "dry season" offensive: "The first five months of the 'dry season'—from November 1965 to March 1966—saw heavy fighting, major victories for the people of South Vietnam and their armed forces, and severe setbacks for the enemy...These losses show that the U.S. imperialists have been unable to carry out their strategic plan for the 'dry season.' In fact, they find themselves bogged down more hopelessly than ever. The gains of the people of South Vietnam and their armed forces during the 'dry season' are highly important. They entitle us to the conclusion that the South Vietnamese people can defeat the U.S. imperialists militarily as well...The U.S. imperialists' major military setbacks during the 'dry season' aggravated their political defeat. After the Honolulu meeting they had hoped to bolster the puppet regime and to effect so-called reforms. The U.S. representatives in Honolulu were still extolling the South Vietnam flunkeys when conflicts broke out within the puppet regime and its army surpassing in acuteness all the conflicts of the previous eleven years. The armed conflicts in Hue and Danang will hasten the downfall of the regime. The growing cost of living, soaring prices, and severe inflation in the temporarily occupied towns show up the fraudulent character of the declarations about reform. The present situation makes possible the rapid development of the political struggle of various sections of the population in the towns, where increasingly resolute demonstrations have been taking place against the U.S. aggressor and the Thieu-Ky clique of generals. The demonstrators demand peace, national and democratic rights, and better living conditions. Simultaneously with the movement in the towns, the peasant struggle for the abolition on the 'strategic villages' and against 'mopping-up' operations is spreading in the countryside. These facts provide favorable conditions for achieving in the foreseeable future military successes that will weaken and isolate the U.S. imperialists and their helpers more than ever...The prestige of the U.S. Air Force has been badly shaken. The attack on North Vietnam has not affected our morale, nor has it prevented us from continuing to help

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South Vietnam. It has aroused intense hatred in the people of North Vietnam, and strengthened their determination to defeat the U.S. imperialists...Although the USA enjoys material superiority and possesses modern weapons, and although it is the leading imperialist power and much bigger than our country, it is waging an unjust war, a war of aggression that is not supported but condemned by the American people and the peoples of the world. Differences in the ruling circles of the USA and within the imperialist camp are increasing. The U.S. imperialists find themselves in complete isolation. The combat discipline of U.S. troops is very low because they are fighting a hopeless war. More and more men in the U.S. Army refuse to carryout orders. On one occasion a whole battalion came out against the war...The puppet regime and its army are torn by discord and are disintegrating. Discipline in the puppet troops has sunk low, desertions are becoming more and more frequent, and soldiers refuse to execute orders. Even the U.S. press has had to admit that 180,000 men desert from the puppet army every year...The aggressor is suffering and is bound to suffer defeats because the human factor is decisive in war. U.S. tactics and weaponry are ill-suited to South Vietnam, they cannot be applied flexibly, and therefore are far from fully effective. In fact, this tends to inhibit the U.S. troops... The U.S. imperialists sent their troops to South Vietnam at a time when the people of South Vietnam had won absolute political superiority over the enemy and were coping with the 'special war', and when the Liberation Army had deployed its forces in every sector and taken the offensive. This is why, ever since they set foot on Vietnam soil, the U.S. troops have been on the defensive...[W]ith the present scope of the people's war in South Vietnam, they do not have the mobile forces the Liberation Army has and hence are unable to carryout their aggressive plan of overrunning the entire territory and bringing it under their control." Le Duc Tho reiterates that the 4-point plan of the DRV and the 5-point statement of the NLF are "the correct basis for a solution to the Vietnam problem. As long as the Americans refuse to give up their plans of aggression and to recognize those points, we will carry on our fight." He issues a plea for unity: "We are convinced that if the socialist community, the international Communist movement, the working class and the peoples of the world unite their efforts, they can defeat all the imperialist plans of aggression. The Communists of Vietnam vow allegiance to the principles of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism. They will devote all their energies to the fight for the unity of the socialist camp and the world Communist movement on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, which they regard as the decisive factor of victory in the struggle for peace, national independence, democracy and socialism." *("The People Will Win", World Marxist Review, IX, no. 7 (July 1966), pp. 68-70.)*

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Spring-Autumn 1966-- Patrick J. McGarvey of the Hoover Institute on War, Revolution and Peace, writing in his book Visions of Victory, discusses the Communist debates over the proper military strategy to adopt:

"The failure of the Communist forces to regain the initiative during the 1965-66 dry season apparently occasioned an extended policy review in the spring of 1966 in Hanoi. A full-scale reappraisal is suggested by the dearth of significant military articles in North Vietnamese publications in the spring 1966, and the absence from public view of the North Vietnamese leaders, which in the past has been an indication of high-level meetings. The scope of the discussions did not become evident until after they had ended. Beginning in July 1966, a series of military articles were published in radio broadcasts and the North Vietnamese press. Unlike military analyses published earlier, these were both polemic in nature and harsh in tone, which suggests that the discussions were heated. It seems likely that General Thanh [Nguyen Chi Thanh, the late North Vietnamese commander of the VC forces in South Vietnam] was personally reproached for the failure of the 1965-66 offensive. During the previous dry season, from November 1964 to May 1965, the Communists had inflicted a lightning series of defeats on ARVN both in the Central Highlands and in the area around Saigon. This campaign put such a strain on ARVN manpower that its tactical reserve was virtually exhausted. The South Vietnamese army was at its nadir in both offensive and defensive capabilities. Only the introduction of large American ground forces deprived the Communists of the victory that was within their grasp. The 1965-66 offensive plans apparently called for a continuation of the large-scale attacks that had been so successful the previous year. The campaign opened with such attacks on the Michelin Rubber Plantation and the Ia Drang Valley, but as the dry season wore on, the disruptive effect of American search-and-destroy missions became more and more evident. They denied the Communists their most important weapon--planning. Communist units were broken up before their planned attacks were fully launched. It was in this atmosphere that Hanoi's policy review opened in the spring of 1966.

The timing of publication of the first military analyses of the war provides some insight into the course of the debate. Apparently General Thanh was called on to defend his stewardship at the outset, and he did so eloquently, with an able assist from an anonymous, obviously authoritative military writer who chose the name Truong Son (The Long Mountain Range)...We can assume that Truong Son was very close to Thanh, not only in outlook but probably also in his position within the military hierarchy in the South. Both Thanh and Truong Son focus on the grave situation created by the influx of American forces in

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mid-1965. Thanh insists that the 'new strategic circumstances' had brought forth many new problems, which required the thoughtful consideration of all Vietnamese Communists, regardless of position. Truong Son, for his part, insists that the introduction of American forces required immediate action. 'If we hesitated even for a minute and occupied ourselves with pondering tactics to use against the Americans before firmly asserting our determination to fight them the consequences would have been disastrous.' He does concede, however, that 'without a scientific comparison between our forces and those of the enemy, we could not expect a victory.'

In his opening remarks, Thanh hints at the divergence in thought between himself and the leaders in the North by stressing the need for 'creative military and political actions' consistent with the 'real situation.' In his words, 'rightist conservative thoughts' and a tendency to overestimate the enemy had flourished in mid-1965. Like Truong Son, he emphasizes the importance of an aggressive reaction to the American build-up; he had wanted to 'win success in the very first battle in order to gain the impetus for a forward advance.'

The vigor of both Thanh and Truong Son derived in large part from the successes that aggressive battlefield maneuvers had brought against the South Vietnamese Army in the 1964-65 dry season. Both authors wrote proudly of their victories against ARVN, which they also saw as defeats for the American 'special-war' strategy, i.e., the widespread use of American advisers with ARVN infantry units in the field and the use of armed helicopters. Truong Son best expressed the confidence with which he and Thanh greeted the arrival of American troops: 'We started fighting the United States troops at a moment when we were winning. The United States imperialists started their regional war [i.e., started using large American ground units] while they were being defeated.' This, according to Truong Son, gave the Viet Cong an advantageous combat position.

As the dry season drew to a close, the leaders in the North realized that the insurgent forces had indeed lost the initiative. Despite the fact that they apparently had gone along with Thanh's plans for coping with the United States forces in the 1965-66 dry season, they blamed him personally for the failures of the campaign. Thanh, however, felt that while his colleagues in the North were free to contemplate the situation at their leisure, he, as battlefield commander, had had to act. He seems to have deeply resented the after-the-fact criticism directed at him in the post-campaign deliberations. Unlike Truong Son, who dwelt at length on previous victories, Thanh wasted no time getting to the point. He berated an imaginary person who 'cited problems without offering solutions,' and 'cited profuse examples from here

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and there to demonstrate vaguely that we can be successful.' He accused this nameless critic of vagueness and empty illogical arguments, adding that he found it impossible to understand what he meant. Thanh insisted that his decisions blended theory with practice, not with 'empty reasoning.' The unnamed critic to whom his rebuttal is addressed seems to be General Giap. In describing what he calls 'erroneous tendencies,' Thanh speaks of someone whose 'conservative spirit prevented him from discovering new facts,' who 'devoted himself to working in accordance with the old customs,' who was 'incapable of analyzing the new situation and responding to it creatively,' and who, finally, 'mechanically copied his own past experiences.' He chided this person for preoccupation with the number of phases in a revolutionary war and with which phase the Communists were in at the time. Reasoning and reference to past experience were doubtless important, but, Thanh argued, the present situation was a new one and his leadership was based on the new reality. In fact, he stated bluntly, 'to repeat exactly what belongs to history in the face of a new reality is adventurism,' and would, moreover, make it impossible for him to be a creative leader.

With Thanh vigorously defending his own integrity, Truong Son was left the task of demonstrating the efficacy of Thanh's judgment. He, too, complained about the unnamed critic who evaluated the enemy in a 'mechanical and bookish way,' but went on to assert at great length that the Communist forces in the South had in fact won significant victories during the 1965-66 dry season. He offered little proof of these assertions. Truong Son revealed that Thanh had decided after the United States buildup to proceed in basically the same way as before, relying on persistent, large-scale, and lengthy attacks on American combat units. In the absence of any concrete proposals from Hanoi, he and Thanh were operating with Hanoi's explicit sanction. Thanh and Truong Son both argued that if they had not taken the offensive, they would have lost their momentum, and the American troops would have been able to establish base areas and begin a systematic offense of their own. In Truong Son's words, 'to continue to apply the policy of attacking, resolutely attacking, and continuously attacking, and to gain time by taking the initiative... was consistent with a basic view of revolutionary military strategy as attack, attack, and only attack!'

In discussing tactics used on the Southern battlefield, Truong Son emphasized large-unit operations and gave only perfunctory attention to guerrilla activities. The tactics he proposed revolved around rapidly mounted, concentrated attacks on enemy command posts, airbases, and troop concentrations. Mobile, vigorous attacks, night and day, against American troops in the

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field were to emphasize hand-to-hand combat in order to deprive the Americans of artillery and air support.

Less than a week after the first Truong Son article was broadcast from Hanoi on July 4, 1966, an analysis of it by Vuong Thua Vu, a North Vietnamese military expert who has written a good deal on the war, was made public. Vu endorsed the conclusions in the first part of Truong Son's article, namely that despite the introduction of American combat forces, the Communists retained the strategic advantage. He agreed that coordination between the battles in the highlands and guerrilla and local-force actions in the populous areas had improved, that they had established a solid logistical system, and that they controlled a good deal of the countryside. He also agreed that the Communists retained the psychological advantage they had won by their battlefield successes in 1964-65. In his view, the Communists' position at the end of the 1965-66 dry season allowed them to pursue with confidence their three major military objectives: increasing American casualties, gradually extending the territory under communist control, and holding onto the territory already under their control. Truong Son's conclusions were, however, only the 'foundation' for planning the forthcoming campaign; his ideas had to be pondered and 'developed more profoundly.' In other words, Vuong implied that Thanh and Truong Son had not convinced the Hanoi leadership that they were altogether right, and that the basic tactics for the forthcoming dry season had yet to be decided. He seemed also to be saying that other views, in addition to Thanh's and Truong Son's, should be heard.

As the 1966-67 dry season drew near, another authoritative but anonymous writer spoke out, this time from the insurgents' ranks. Broadcast on the clandestine Liberation Radio from South Vietnam in early September, an article by 'Cuu Long' (Mekong River) outlined another basic approach to the forthcoming offensive—attacking the American rear in force...The unknown author is one of the most vociferous and articulate military thinkers among the insurgents. He may be one of the hard-core Viet Cong cadres who led the insurgency during the quiet years 1954-60. His views seem to be oriented to the Southern cause, and he may have resented the large influx of Northern leaders in 1964, when the Viet Cong had victory in sight. The tenor of his writing and his proposed strategy both suggest that although he was by no means timid, he rejected senseless carnage. Throughout his treatise he underscores the prospect of difficult times ahead and indirectly rejects continued frontal engagements with American forces.

Like Vuong Thua Vu, Cuu Long agreed with Truong Son that the first dry-season offensive against the American forces had been

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successful. He also claimed that the Viet Cong's position had improved during the rainy summer season of 1966, although he indirectly admitted that Viet Cong ranks had been depleted by casualties during the preceding dry season in stating that by the summer of 1966, their forces had 'limited strength.' He took comfort from the ability of the Viet Cong to inflict casualties on American units in the Central Highlands campaign during the summer, into which, according to Cuu Long, the United States Air Mobile Division had been drawn by the Viet Cong. The United States 1st Infantry Division had also suffered many casualties in its efforts to open the main roads through the highlands. The bombing of oil installations near Hanoi and Haiphong in the summer of 1966 indicated the Americans' frustration at their lack of progress in the South, and proved, he said, that the psychological advantage still lay with the Viet Cong. Cuu Long voiced steadfast determination to continue the fight during the next offensive season, but admitted that the campaign would 'surely be arduous and fierce.' Bowing in the direction of Thanh and Truong Son, he said the insurgents were graced with 'correct leadership,' but in an aside he reminded them that the fight would be difficult because the Americans had many troops and an impressive arsenal of planes, guns, and armored vehicles.

American strengths, however, were more than balanced off by serious weaknesses. Interestingly, Cuu Long first pointed to political factors in South Vietnam and the United States as major weakness, claiming that the unrest in Hue, Dalat, and Saigon during the summer of 1966 and the ripples of dissent in the United States spelled doom for American plans. Second, he asserted that the bloody hand-to-hand tactics used by the Viet Cong in the past year had deprived the American forces of air and artillery support and had disastrously affected American morale. The length of American supply lines and the costliness of meeting logistical requirements in South Vietnam by shipments from the United States would ultimately work against the Americans because American 'workers,' who had to pay for the war, would finally rebel. The Americans' enormous support operations were particularly vulnerable, Cuu Long said, and their 'rear area' had many gaps to be exploited. Finally, corruption among South Vietnamese officials and the timidity of South Vietnamese troops were glaring weaknesses for which there was no solution.

Viet Cong strength, according to Cuu Long, resided in the fact that their leadership 'constantly perfected and created tactics and techniques.' In the dry season just past the Viet Cong forces had gained valuable battle experience by experimenting with a variety of offensive tactics. Cuu Long concluded by urging

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that the coming dry-season offensive concentrate on major American weaknesses. Attacks in force on supply and garrison areas would hasten victory. Diversionary actions could draw large numbers of American troops from their bases, and in their absence the bases themselves could be attacked. In Cuu Long's view, such attacks would keep American forces off balance and on the defensive by disrupting the crucial logistical support necessary to large-scale search-and-destroy operations.

A short but pointed article written in Hanoi was the last contribution to the debate before the opening of the 1966-67 dry season. The pseudonymous author, Le Ba, was either General Giap himself or someone directly influenced by Giap's thinking. In an undisguised call for consideration of Hanoi's views on strategy, Le Ba argued that it was only by dint of guerrilla raids and harassing actions that the Viet Cong has been successful during the summer of 1966.

Guerrillas, he asserted, had disrupted American attempts to establish base areas, lines of communications, and supply depots. He claimed, further, that the American pacification program had been seriously hampered by local raids, and that guerrillas had encircled and penetrated most major American bases, thus tying down an increasing number of troops in security missions. Lines of communication were constantly harassed; Le Ba pointed to the many ambushes along the main north-south artery, Coastal Highway 1, and on Routes 14, 19, and 21 in the Central Highlands as evidence of the widespread disruptive effects of small actions. He also cited the increase in urban terrorism during the summer of 1966, pointing to raids on bases, clubs, and warehouses as moves that tied down large numbers of American troops. It was, Le Ba claimed, only because guerrilla forces had expanded rapidly that the main Communist forces were able to grow and engage American units. He suggested with a trace of anger that the guerrilla forces were disgruntled at having to supply trained men to the larger main-force units and stated flatly that without guerrillas, the main-force units would have been in difficult straits."
(Patrick J. McGarvey, Visions of Victory (Stanford: Stanford University, 1969), pp. 9-15; Texts of articles by Thanh, Truong Son and Cuu Long appear in Ibid., pp. 61-100.)

mid-1966-- If Nguyen Chi Thanh had powerful critics within the DRV ruling circles (including the moderates, Vo Nguyen Giap and Pham Van Dong), he also had powerful friends. A captured speech by General Nguyen Van Vinh, Chief of Staff of the Vietnam People's Army, to senior VC cadres in South Vietnam discloses some of the confusion in the minds of the North Vietnamese leaders. On the one hand, he states that "[i]n a resistance war it is right to speak of protracted war and self-reliance,

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and the urge to fight and win quickly represents a rightist tendency." On the other hand, however, he notes: "Today in restraining and defeating the enemy in the limited war in the South, we also speak of achieving a decisive success within a relatively short period of time. The contents of the guidelines and strategy involving protracted fighting and the contents of achieving decisive success within a relatively short period of time are not mutually contradictory." In this same general time period, Lao Dong Secretary-General Le Duan sends a letter to General Thanh saying: "On the principle of waging a long-term struggle, tremendous efforts are to be made to obtain decisive victory within a relatively short period of time." *(P. J. Honey, "The Offensive—Hanoi's Change of Strategy", China News Analysis, 701 (22 March 1968), p. 4.)*

mid-late 1966-- Le Duan's letter to General Thanh also reveals the debate within the Lao Dong Politburo on the use of negotiations as a part of Communist strategy: "The idea of fighting-negotiating is not new in our country's history. Nguyen Thai employed such a strategy in defeating feudal elements during the Ming Dynasty. Our comrades in China adopted a fighting-negotiating policy in their struggle against the U.S. and Chiang [Kai-shek]. This strategy also was employed at the end of the Korean war...However now the matter is complex and the question of negotiations [with the enemy] has developed many divergent views...Some countries which strongly support our struggle want to see us at the conference table, they say, to prevent further needless bloodshed, although their view may result from their own foreign policy considerations, internal politics or misunderstanding of our situation. In our own ranks are those who hold that the political struggle now has become paramount to the military struggle, but the Party view is that at this moment in history this is not true...Negotiation efforts must of course serve the political struggle. Determining the timing of this strategy has been entrusted, by the Party Central Committee voting unanimously, to the Politburo and it will evaluate the situation and the enemy's condition, and determine the proper strategy with respect to negotiations." *(Douglas Pike, Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1967), p. 155.)*

July-- Writing in the July-September issue of The China Quarterly, Jan S. Prybyla estimates that economic grants and credits received by the DRV from all "socialist countries" came to 2,000 millions of old rubles from 1955 to 1960 and to 1,330 millions of old rubles from 1961 to 1965. In sum: "From the mass of contradictory evidence it would be hazardous to guess the relative contributions of China, the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe, but such a guess, based on the relative participation

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of the Soviet Union in North Vietnam's foreign trade, would estimate that the Soviet Union contributed about half of the total amount of aid, and Eastern Europe roughly one-quarter, probably less. The Chinese contribution, mostly labour and experts, is probably exaggerated by enthusiasts of the Chinese model, especially regarding the repair of border-zone bridges, railroads and footpaths, an activity important in the 1955-60 period and again since 1965...The amount of aid in both periods looks quite modest in dollar terms: $380 million in grants (including the questionable $5 million Soviet anti-malaria 'grant') and $452 million in credits, a total of $832 million for the entire decade, compared with about $2 billion in United States support of the South Vietnamese economy from 1955-62. In 1963 alone, U.S. economic aid to South Vietnam amounted to over $200 million. One must consider also that Chinese aid pledges are notoriously overextended." *(Jan S. Prybyla, "Soviet and Chinese Economic Aid to North Vietnam", The China Quarterly (July-September 1966), pp. 92-93.)*

3-5 July-- The aroused commentaries of Peking to the initial stages of the American air raids on the North had cooled off by mid-1965. Although each succeeding move by the "imperialists" was followed by statements that a new escalation had occurred, no attempt was made to link these actions to China's security or to specific consequences from the Chinese side. When US air forays struck targets on the outskirts of Hanoi and Haiphong in late June 1966, Peking still did not revise its declarations, confining itself to saying (one again) that the North Vietnamese were no longer "subject to any restrictions in hitting back at the U.S. aggressors" because the US had "further broken" the demarcation boundary set by the Geneva Agreements. As previously, it was up to "the Vietnamese" to issue retaliatory blows. *(See Jenmin Jih Pao editorial of 5 July 1966; also the Chinese Government statement of 3 July in American Consulate General, Hong Kong, Survey of China Mainland Press, no. 3734 (8 July 1966), p. 37.)*

4 July-- Peking radio states that the Chinese Communist Foreign Ministry has accused the US of making "active preparations for sending its ground forces into Laos." The statement also says: "At the instigation of the United States, military personnel of Thailand and South Viet Nam have successfully infiltrated into the areas of central and lower Laos." The US State Department calls these Chinese charges "pretty far out." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 192.)*

6 July-- The Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact, meeting in Bucharest, issues an angry statement that the conferees

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(Bulgaria, Hungary, East Germany, Poland, Romania, the USSR, and Czechoslovakia) "regard the bombings of the suburbs of Hanoi and the port of Haiphong, the biggest cities in North Viet Nam, as a new and still more dangerous stage in the American policy of 'escalation' of the war in Viet Nam. As a result, the war in Viet Nam, while seriously aggravating the international situation, is assuming a new character still more dangerous to world peace and security...The US war in Viet Nam is the most cynical manifestation of the aggressive policy of American imperialism. It is an outrage upon international law and international agreements and a gross breach of the UN Charter. It was the United States that frustrated the implementation of the 1954 Geneva Agreements which provided for all-Vietnamese elections and reunification of Viet Nam without any foreign interference...Nobody will be deceived by the assertions of the American Government that it is ready to conduct talks on the settlement of the Vietnamese problem. These statements on 'peace-loving designs' and 'peaceful negotiations' are false from beginning to end, because they are accompanied not only by the continuation but by the expansion of hostilities... There is a crying incompatibility between the continuation of the war in Viet Nam and the US assertions that it wishes to take steps towards disarmament..." The conferees "fully support" the 4-point plan of the DRV and the 5-point statement of the NLF as "a just basis for the political settlement of the Vietnamese issue." They state:

"The United States must embark upon the road of strict observance of the Geneva Agreements on Viet Nam, must stop the aggression against the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, putting an immediate, final and unconditional end to air-raids on its territory, stop the armed intervention in South Viet Nam, withdraw its armed forces and the troops of its satellites from South Viet Nam, dismantle all American war bases in this country, recognise the National Liberation Front as the only genuine representative of the South Vietnamese population, recognise the right of the Vietnamese people to determine their destiny without outside interference and to decide themselves the question of national unification on peaceful lines.

Having discussed the situation in Viet Nam, arising from the expansion of hostilities by the United States, the Parties to the Warsaw Treaty:

1. warn the government of the United States most resolutely about the responsibility it assumes before mankind by continuing and expanding this war, for all the unforeseeable consequences that may arise from this for the United States itself, among others;

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2. are rendering and will go on giving the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam ever increasing moral and political support and every kind of assistance, including economic help and assistance with means of defence, materials, equipment and specialists, needed to victoriously repulse the American aggression, with due account for the requirements of the new phase of war in Viet Nam.

3. declare their readiness, if the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam requests, to allow their volunteers to go to Viet Nam in order to help the Vietnamese people in their struggle against the American aggressors;

4. vigorously condemn the actions of the United States, aimed at expanding the war to Laos and Cambodia; express their solidarity with the peoples of these countries, demand strict observance by the United States of the 1954 and 1962 Geneva Agreements concerning these countries, respect for their sovereignty, independence, neutrality, and territorial integrity." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 9 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), pp. 57-59.)*

10 July-- A Jenmin Jih Pao article, written under the pseudonym of Hsiang Tung-huei, reaffirms the importance of "self-reliance" for the victory of people's wars. Repeating the basic thoughts of Chairman Mao, the author poses the proposition: "No foreign aid can replace the struggle of one's own people. No matter how great foreign aid may be, it can only serve a supplementary purpose. If one wants to make revolution, to achieve victory in revolution, one must firmly rely on the strength of the masses in one's own country, and moreover must prepare to carry on the struggle independently in the event all foreign materials and aid are cut off. Only in this way can one occupy an undefeatable position under all circumstances." Referring specifically to the Vietnam conflict, the author holds that the strengthening and expansion of the "revolutionary force of the southern Vietnamese people" has been due primarily to its reliance on its own resources. Although still faced with a "difficult struggle," it could only hope to defeat the American aggressors by "continuing to rely firmly on the strength of the masses and the support of the people of all nations throughout the world... "The author makes clear, as had Lin Piao before him, that self-reliance and international aid are not mutually exclusive. *(Jenmin Jih Pao (People's Daily), 10 July 1966.)*

13-19 July-- Prime Minister Indira Gandhi of India visits Moscow and suggests that Britain and the Soviet Union reconvene the 1954 Geneva Conference. Before departing, she notes that "the stand of the USSR is that any proposal should first have the approval

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of North Vietnam." On 16 July, British Prime Minister Harold Wilson arrives in Moscow to discuss the war. The Soviets deny his request to reconvene the Geneva Conference. On 19 July, U Thant confers with the Kremlin leaders and is told that their good offices will be available if an when Hanoi decides to seek negotiations. *(Donald S. Zagoria, Vietnam Triangle (New York: Pegasus, 1967), p. 155.)*

14-23 July-- On 14 July, Secretary of State Dean Rusk tells a subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee that if the DRV tries and convicts American pilots held prisoner it would be a "very, very grave development." On 16 July, U Thant warns North Vietnam that "the possible trial of American prisoners is certain to generate still more intense escalation of the war"--to a point where it might bring on World War III. On 20 July, Pope Paul declares that mistreatment of POW's would result in "very grave consequences." On 23 July, Ho Chi Minh replies that there is "no trial in view" for captured Americans. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 192.)*

17 July-- President Ho Chi Minh issues an appeal to his "compatriots and fighters throughout the country" expressing his confidence in ultimate victory: "The war may last another five, ten, twenty or more years, Hanoi, Haiphong and other cities and enterprises may be destroyed, but the Vietnamese people will not be intimidated." He reiterates: "Let the United States end its war of aggression in Viet Nam, withdraw from this country all US and satellite troops, and peace will return here at once. Viet Nam's stand is clear: it is the four points of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the five points of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation. There is no alternative!" *(Ho Chi Minh, "Appeal to Our Compatriots and Fighters Throughout the Country", Against U.S. Aggression, For National Salvation (Hanoi: GPO, 1967), pp. 145-46.)*

22 July-- President Liu Shao-chi of China warns the United States: "Since you have torn the 1954 Geneva Agreement to shreds the Chinese Government and people have naturally ceased to be bound by the Geneva Agreement in supporting the Vietnamese people's struggle against US aggression and for national salvation. Since you have completely broken the line of demarcation between Southern and Northern Viet Nam by your war of aggression, the Chinese Government and people have naturally still more so ceased to be restricted and bound in any way in rendering support and aid to the Vietnamese people...If you think you can unscrupulously escalate the war of aggression without meeting due punishment then you will find it too late to repent. The Chinese Government reaffirms that the US Imperialist aggression against Viet Nam

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is an aggression against China. The 700 million Chinese people provide powerful backing for the Vietnamese people. The vast expanse of China's territory is the reliable rear area of the Vietnamese people..." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 9 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), pp. 65-66.)*

22 July-- Chinese Vice-Premier T'ao Chu states in a speech that by "bombing North Viet Nam the United States has completely broken the line of demarcation between Southern and Northern Viet Nam. Now, the United States bombing of the capital of the Viet Nam Democratic Republic spells the final burial of the Geneva Agreements and the total liquidation of all the restrictions and limitations laid down in the Geneva Agreements...In these circumstances whoever still attempts to use the Geneva Agreements to tie the hands of the Vietnamese people, the Chinese people and the revolutionary people of the world, will never succeed... In these circumstances the Chinese people have further ceased to be subject to any bonds or restrictions in their support and aid to the Vietnamese people...The Geneva Agreements are already non-existent. Speaking of the Geneva Agreements, in the present circumstances, it is imperative to demand that the United States unconditionally withdraw its armed forces from Viet Nam immediately, totally, thoroughly and completely." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 9 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), p. 66.)*

22 July-- Although Peking continued to insist that it was willing to pay any price and make any sacrifice for the Vietnam war effort, it also made very clear that it would be China, not the DRV, who would determine when the Vietnamese brothers needed direct CPR support. In a message to Truong Chinh, chairman of the Standing Committee of the DRV National Assembly, Chu Teh, Truong Chinh's counterpart in the CPR Governmental structure, states: "Vietnam and China are fraternal neighbors as closely related as lips to teeth. The Chinese people have consistently and unreservedly supported and aided in all fields the Vietnamese people's struggle against U.S. aggression and for national salvation. The Chinese government has already solemnly stated that in accordance with the interests and demands of the Vietnamese people, we will at any time and in any place take such actions as we deem necessary [emphasis added]. Wherever the U.S. aggressor expands the war and however heavy the price, we will unswervingly support and aid the Vietnamese people in fighting to the end until they win final victory." *(American Consulate General, Hong Kong, Survey of the China Mainland Press, no. 3747 (27 July 1966), p. 28.)*

23 July-- On the 4th anniversary of the signing of the 1962 Geneva Agreements on Laos, the Neo Lao Hak Xat issues a pamphlet

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entitled Twelve Years of American Intervention and Aggression in Laos which contains a "4-point stand" and "5-point solution" (originally issued in October, 1965) to the Laotian problem. The 4-point stand reads:

"1. To resolutely defend the peace, neutrality, sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Laos on the basis of strict respect for, and correct implementation of, the 1962 Geneva Agreement, the Tripartite Agreement of Zurich (1961) and the Plain of Jars (1962);

2. To persistently fight and defeat the United States' imperialist intervention and aggression against Laos under whatever form;

3. To ensure the Lao people's right to settle themselves their own internal affairs by means of peaceful negotiations among the parties concerned, free from the American imperialists' interference;

4. To persistently struggle for the implementation of the political program of the Tripartite National Union Government in order to build up a peaceful, neutral, independent, democratic, unified and prosperous Laos."

The 5-point solution is a call...

"1. To withdraw from Laos all the armed forces, military personnel, covert military organizations and all weapons and war material which the American imperialists and their satellites have illegally introduced into Laos; to dismantle all U.S. military bases in Laos;

2. To completely stop all acts of aggression against Laos by the United States and first and foremost, to immediately stop American air raids, and attacks by pro-American troops against the zone under the control of the Lao patriotic forces;

3. To put an end to all collusion between the United States' lackeys in Vientiane, Bangkok and Saigon, and the utilization of the territory of Thailand and South Vietnam as springboards for intervention in Laos;

4. To conduct tripartite negotiations in earnest and in a spirit of mutual understanding and concession with a view to solving all the problems outstanding between the parties concerned, and stabilizing step-by-step the situation in the country;

5. To restore the organizational structure and the principle of tripartite unanimity of the Lao National Union Government set

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up on the basis of the 1961 Zurich Agreement and the 1962 Plain of Jars Agreement."

The pamphlet declares that "...recent events in Laos have further shown that the four-point stand and five-point solution are the only sensible and correct ones which alone, if abided by, can ensure a basis settlement of the Lao problem, save Laos from an ever more dangerous situation, and eliminate a major threat to peace and security in Indochina and Southeast Asia." *(Twelve Years of American Intervention and Aggression in Laos (Liberated Zone of Laos: Neo Lao Hak Xat Publications, 1966), pp. 125-26.)*

27 July-- The New York Times reports that the July issue of the monthly Le Sangkum, edited by Prince Sihanouk, has sharply condemned Pathet Lao claims on Cambodia's Stungtreng Province, which had been made in May and June. Promising to fight any Pathet Lao attempts at annexation of these territories, the magazine states: "When Cambodia's territorial integrity is at stake, it does not matter whether the annexationists are pro-imperialists or anti-imperialists." *(New York Times, 27 July 1966, p. 2.)*

August-- According to unconfirmed reports, Pham Van Dong visits the USSR and informs the Soviet leaders that his Government will accept any "favorable possibility" of beginning peace talks. Also this month, Thai Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman proposes the convening of an all-Asian peace conference on Vietnam. The Soviet reaction, as expressed in Pravda, is that the "Vietnamese people themselves will decide their own fate, without any outside interference." Moscow reiterates that only Hanoi's 4-points can achieve a settlement. *(Donald S. Zagoria, Vietnam Triangle (New York: Pegasus, 1967), p. 155.)*

August-- In a secret taped speech (parts of which were captured in January, 1967) to the North Vietnamese Seventh Division in South Vietnam, Major General Tran Do, who is one of eight DRV Generals known to be commanding VC forces, comments that President Johnson has misinterpreted American public opinion by believing that the polls taken after US attacks on Hanoi showed increasing popular support for Administration policy. Instead, Tran Do suggests, people were expressing their desire for peace—they "think that by bombing, the war can be rapidly ended and peace can be quickly restored." US weakness on the home front, Do suggests, is largely a product of the psychological aversion of capitalist societies to protracted war. Since they are not used to hardships, Americans cannot endure a long struggle that seems endless: "In fact it is a very arduous task for the Americans to fight a protracted war although they are a well-to-do people. We can endure the hardships of a lengthy war, but

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they are unable to endure the hardships of such a war because they are well-to-do people. A poor man can subsist by spending one piaster a day, but a man who is accustomed to living in comfort is uncomfortable even though he spends 10 piasters a day..." As war costs mount, US capitalist society, despite its vast riches, will not be able to sustain the financial burden. This is not to suggest, however, that the struggle will be over quickly or easily. General Do notes that the Americans "will not let themselves be brought to their knees like the French, who only wanted to do away with the fighting once and for all no matter how...They may be able to go on for a short period of time because of their stuborn nature. If they intend to continue for five or ten years, they will learn that we are a terribly difficult lot to deal with." Thus, Do believes that it is the nature of the enemy to react negatively to defeat by escalation even though riven with unsolvable contradictions. He reveals a Lao Dong Central Committee decision of December, 1965 "to fight better and not to set up a time schedule for our fighting." A timetable was criticized as being "rather too mechanical..., besides the fact that you have inadvertently imposed limitations on your activities." In short, his statements would seem to indicate that the Party has decided that adherence to a rigid time scheme is contrary to the open-ended nature of protracted war such as would have to be waged until the Americans decided to leave Vietnam. As to the timing of negotiations, Do argues that peace talks should not be permitted to interfere with the successful culmination of the military struggle: "Our basic intention is to win militarily. We use military victories as decisive factors to end the present conflict. We want to end the war through military victories and not peace negotiations. Negotiations are a form of diplomatic struggle. We are military men and we must concern ourselves with military struggles and not consider diplomatic struggles...we must gain military victories before even thinking diplomatic struggles. And even when we are fighting diplomatically, we must go on with our war efforts, we must multiply our military victories if we want to succeed diplomatically." For Tran Do, the armed struggle clearly takes priority over the political struggle; one cannot even consider negotiating in the absence of military victories. Thus, his speech is an unequivocal statement that the duty of the army is to carry on armed struggle in order to assure that a negotiated settlement will confirm Hanoi's complete victory: "We must remain until the final victory." Tran Do, in sum, seems to be stating the army's "hard line" for not stopping the fight until the hard-won achievements of the past are secured in total victory. It may also be noted that he does this without challenging the primacy of the Lao Dong Party in the political and military spheres.
(Melvin Gurtov, Hanoi on War and Peace (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, P-3696, 1967), pp. 6-8, 17, 28-29; Text in Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 11 pp. 117-19.)

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4 August-- French correspondent Jean Raffaelli reports from North Vietnam on the DRV's evacuation and dispersal strategy to counteract the American bombing:

"North Vietnam today was engaged in an extra-ordinary operation of total economic dispersion, moving all of its factories and industrial plants away from the big cities to scattered up-country regions. This industrial exodus on a countrywide scale is due to be completed by the end of the year. Observers say it is a new sign that North Vietnam's leaders are absolutely determined to resist even the most crushing American assaults.

The dispersion of the factories is being carried out along with the evacuation of most of the civilian population from North Vietnam's big cities, mainly Hanoi and Haiphong. But, whereas the population can always return to the cities later, factories are not as fluid as people. The factories will remain permanently at the dispersed sites to which they are now being transferred.

Regionalization is the term used in Hanoi for the exodus operation. North Vietnam has been entirely divided up into zones capable of producing, resisting, and surviving in an autonomous manner. Each zone, depending on its resources and accessibility, is receiving its consignment of political and industrial talent, and its shipment of factories.

The decision to regionalize was a hard one for North Vietnam's leaders after 21 years of industrial buildup. It runs directly counter to their plans for applying the classic Marxist doctrine of heavily centralized industry.

But, for the moment, Marxist industrial doctrine is being sacrificed to the demands of national defense. All communist observers in Hanoi feel that this decentralization would slam the brakes on the economic development of North Vietnam, slowing the country's industrial progress for many years to come.

This deliberate decision by North Vietnam's leaders means they are envisaging the war from a world-strategy outlook. Regionalization will reduce all mobile industrial targets to a minimum. It will also make possible the creation of regional resistance forces, capable of surviving if the vulnerable regions of the Red River delta are crushed or abandoned.

The big cement works at Hanoi and the steel mills at Thai Nguyen cannot be uprooted. But all other factories are leaving by rail and road for safer regions. Fuel and industrial equipment unloaded from ships in Haiphong are being sent directly to the new regional sites where the factories will be set up."

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(Oleg Hoeffding, Bombing North Vietnam: An Appraisal of Economic and Political Effects (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 1966), pp. 33-34.)

7 August-- In a Foreign Ministry statement, China cautions Cambodia against improving its relations with the United States, noting that Washington "has never shown any respect" for Cambodian neutrality. The statement asserts that the Johnson Administration cannot "be trusted and that its aggressive nature will never change." It says that Communist China is "the most trustworthy friend of the Cambodian people." *(New York Times, 8 August 1966, p. 3.)*

12-16 August-- On 12 August, the New York Times reports that the number of uniformed Chinese soldiers in North Vietnam working on road and supply line repairs and improvement has risen from an estimated 30,000-40,000 troops in July to some 50,000 men in August, "including railroad, construction and antiaircraft specialists, organized in regiments and divisions." Four days later, the Times reports that supplies of weapons, principally small arms, and rice to maintain rations, continue to roll in on the China-North Vietnam rail link. *(New York Times, 12 August 1966, p. 4; Harrison E. Salisbury, "Will Russia and China Pull Together for Hanoi?" New York Times, 16 April 1966, p. 4E.)*

24 August-- A newsman suggests to President Johnson that the Communists seem to be misled by statements that the United States is building "permanent" bases in Vietnam and Thailand. This might make them doubt that the Americans will withdraw at the war's end. President Johnson replies: "I have made it as clear as I know how to make it, that we do not intend to maintain any bases in South Vietnam or Thailand, that we have no desire to keep our men there...We are ready to stop the moment they are willing to stop. I have even asked that we give thought to planning how we could convert these bases to useful civilian purpose, and we are giving study to that now." *(Public Papers of the Presidents, Lyndon B. Johnson, 1966 (Washington: GPO, 1967), vol. 2, p. 882.)*

1-5 September-- Speaking in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, President de Gaulle says that the United States will gain if it takes its forces out of South Vietnam. If it does this, he says, "what an audience would the United States recapture from one end of the world to the other, and what an opportunity would peace find on the scene and everywhere else." He suggests that the "continuous reinforcement in Viet Nam means that the war is coming increasingly closer to China" and becoming "increasingly provoking in the eyes of the Soviet Union." He states that France will not side with the Americans in a general war in Asia. On the following day, de Gaulle and Sihanouk sign a joint communique calling

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on all interested powers to pledge noninterference in the internal affairs of Vietnam and for a cessation of all acts of war in that country. In an indirect reply to de Gaulle on 5 September, President Johnson says that the United States will offer a timetable for withdrawal of its troops from South Vietnam when one is offered by the DRV. He adds: "We cannot walk away from the simple fact that the peace and security of many nations are threatened if aggressors are permitted to succeed in a strategic area of the world, if vital treaties are broken and if men and arms are moved illegally across international boundaries to conquer small nations." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 196.)*

7 September-- At the Sino-US Ambassadorial talks in Warsaw, the Chinese Ambassador to Poland, Mr. Wang Kuo-chuan issues a statement: "Recently, the US Government has time and again violated the agreement between China and the United States by unilaterally revealing the contents of the Sino-US Ambassadorial talks. The Soviet revisionist leading clique has followed up by conducting a great deal of propaganda about a 'Sino-US dialogue.' Singing a duet, they have spread deceptive propaganda in a vain attempt to create an impression of Sino-US reconciliation, cover up the US imperialist policies of aggression and war and obscure the banner of opposition to US imperialism held aloft by the Chinese people...The US Government's deceptive propaganda and the Soviet revisionist leading clique's profuse nonsense will only serve further to expose their sinister features ...(1) Make trouble, fail, make trouble again, fail again... till their doom; that is the logic of the imperialists and all reactionaries the world over in dealing with the people's cause. The US Government will never go against this logic in its actions in Viet Nam...The more the US Government expands the war, the more disastrous will be its defeat. Each time the US Government suffers a defeat, it escalates the war; and each time it escalates the war, it suffers a correspondingly heavier defeat. The US Government has been inescapably caught in a vicious circle in Viet Nam...(2) In order to maintain their rule and carry out expansion abroad, reactionary ruling classes have always resorted to the dual tactics of butcher-like suppression and priest-like deception. This is exactly what the US Government has been doing in Viet Nam...The crux of the Viet Nam question at present is absolutely not the gradual de-escalation of the war, but the immediate and complete withdrawal of the US aggressors from southern Viet Nam...As everyone knows, the Geneva agreements were torn to shreds by the US Government long ago. The attempt to use the Geneva agreements to tie the hands of the people of Viet Nam, China and the whole world will never succeed...The US

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Government will never be able to obtain at the conference table what it has failed to obtain on the battlefield. By playing its counter-revolutionary dual tactics; the US Government absolutely cannot deceive the Vietnamese people... (3) The Vietnamese people's struggle against US aggression and for national salvation is a just one; it has won the firm support of the people throughout the world and is sure to be victorious...The Chinese Government has time and again solemnly stated that US imperialist aggression against Viet Nam is aggression against China. The 700 million Chinese people provide powerful backing for the Vietnamese people. The vast expanse of China's territory is the reliable rear area of the Vietnamese people. In order to support the Vietnamese people in winning thorough victory in the war of resistance against US aggression, the Chinese people are ready to undertake maximum national sacrifices." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs--Vietnam, no. 9 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), pp. 81-82.)*

8 September-- Kommunist, the official theoretical journal of the Soviet Communist Party, reviews in an unsigned article the Soviet policy toward Vietnam. It notes: "Even though it does not share a common border with Viet Nam and is thousands of kilometers away from it, the Soviet Union is rendering the brave Vietnamese people ever greater economic and military, material and moral assistance, which it requires for the successful repulsion of American aggression, strengthening its defense capability and meeting the needs of the national economy on the basis of the requirements stemming from the new phase of the war in Viet Nam." Specifically, in terms of economic aid: "The Soviet Union and the other socialist countries are giving the DRV extensive help. As the Vietnamese press noted three-fifths of the state capital construction is taking place with the help of credits and aid provided by the socialist countries. Dozens of industrial enterprises and projects including electric power stations, several electric power transmission lines, the Hong-Gay coal basin, the Apatite Mine in Lao-Kae, the lead combine in Kao-Bang, the machine plant in Hanoi, the canning combine in Haiphong, and two tea factories in Fu-Tho were restored or built with USSR help. Some of these enterprises are the biggest in Southeastern Asia. The Soviet Union has also helped in geological and fish prospecting work, in the struggle against malaria, and in the building and equipment of many higher educational institutions and scientific establishments. Currently a series of industrial projects are being developed with the technical assistance of the USSR." The Soviets support the 4-point plan of the DRV and the 5-point statement of the NLF which, they claim, are a "just basis" for a settlement in accordance with the Geneva Agreements. Once again, it is stated

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that the "US government must strictly implement the Geneva Accords. It must immediately, irrevocably and unconditionally stop its bombings of the territory of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. It must put an end to its armed intervention in South Viet Nam, withdraw the American troops and the troops of the satellites out of South Viet Nam, abolish all American military bases in that country, recognize the National Liberation Front as the only real representative of the South Vietnamese population and grant the people of Viet Nam the right to determine its fate without foreign interference, solving alone the problem of the peaceful unification of the country." Turning to the Chinese issue, the article declares that the "interests of the cause of peace adamantly demand that all socialist countries, all communist parties, fully manifest a feeling of international responsibility, that they unite in single action and rally around them all progressive, democratic and peace loving forces to stop imperialist aggression in Viet Nam...The anti-Soviet campaign, the provocations aimed at the drastic worsening of relations between the USSR and the Chinese People's Republic, long and systematically underway in China, damage the unity of the international communist movement, and the struggle for socialism, national liberation, peace and security." Kommunist then sets forth the official Soviet declaration on this subject from the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party: "Under circumstances in which imperialism has energized its efforts in the struggle against the revolutionary movement and is expanding its dirty war in Viet Nam such a step constitutes a particularly great service to imperialism and reaction. The responsibility for the refusal of joint and coordinated struggle against imperialism and reaction and for the continuous attempts at splitting the communist movement, and the socialist comity as well as weakening the anti-imperialist front falls entirely on the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese People's Republic." *("The People of Vietnam Will Win", trans. DES, Kommunist, no. 13 (September 1966), pp. 92-98.)*

9 September-- Peking Review reports a Chinese Ministry of Defense protest: "U.S. imperialist military planes in the early hours of the morning of August 29 flagrantly attacked small Chinese cargo ships sailing the normal shipping route in the Gulf of Bac Bo. They sank one of them and damaged another, killing nine Chinese seamen and wounding seven others. This is another blood debt owed to the Chinese people by U.S. imperialism...A spokesman of the Ministry of National Defence emphasized that this wanton bombing attack...was by no means an isolated incident. It was another serious step in the frantic war provocations against China by U.S. imperialism." *("Chinese National Defence Ministry's Strongest Protest Against U.S. Imperialism's War Provocation", Peking Review, IX, no. 37 (9 September 1966), p. 17.)*

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22 September-- At the plenary session of the United Nations in general debate, US Ambassador Arthur Goldberg says that the United States is willing to take the first step to get peace talks started. "We are prepared to order a cessation of all bombing of North Vietnam the moment we are assured, privately or otherwise, that this step will be answered promptly by a corresponding and appropriate de-escalation on the other side." He also proposes: "The United States stands ready to withdraw its forces as others withdraw theirs so that peace can be restored in South Vietnam, and favors international machinery—either of the United Nations or other machinery—to ensure effective supervision of the withdrawal." He adds that there would appear to be no difficulty in finding a place for the Viet Cong in the negotiations. *(90th Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (Third Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate (Washington: GPO, 1967), pp. 223-27.)*

24 September-- Peking's Jenmin Jih Pao comments on US-Soviet "collusion" in the United Nations General Assembly, which has just opened its 21st session:

> On September 19, U.S. Secretary of State Rusk said that the Vietnam question 'may not be a formal item on the [U.N.] agenda ...In any event, I am sure Vietnam will be discussed fully.' On the same day, *Pravda* chimed in saying that, although the Vietnam question was not formally listed on the General Assembly's agenda, yet this by no means showed that the United Nations was deprived of the possibility of playing a positive role.
>
> On September 20, U.S. Vice-President Humphrey and Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko held talks separately with U.N. Secretary-General U Thant. The Vietnam question was the central topic in these talks...Their purpose is to draw the Vietnam question into the United Nations and inveigle others to join them in making use of the current U.N. General Assembly session to push their new 'peace talks' fraud still harder.
>
> In June this year, the United States and the Soviet Union collaborated in staging a big conspiracy of 'forcing peace talks through bombing,' the outcome of which was a shameful debacle. Having failed to accomplish anything through this trick, they have now adopted another ruse, switching back to their old plan of 'inducing peace talks by a suspension of bombings'...
>
> One of their propositions is as follows: the United States stops bombing the north, and in south Vietnam 'both sides scale down all military activities' and 'de-escalate' the war.

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This puts the aggressor and the victim of aggression on a par, places the bandit who has invaded the territory of another country and the people who are struggling to defend their homes on a par. It is nothing but an effort to cover up the U.S. crime of aggression against Vietnam...'De-escalation' or 'escalation,' so long as a single American soldier remains on Vietnamese soil, the Vietnamese people will definitely fight on resolutely. The core of the present Vietnam question is by no means a question of 'de-escalating' the war, but a question of the U.S. aggressors getting out of Vietnam immediately, lock, stock and barrel.

Another proposition is that if someone gives a time schedule when 'infiltration [into south Vietnam] will be halted,' the United States will also produce a 'schedule for the withdrawal of [U.S.] forces from Vietnam.' The so-called 'infiltration' is just double talk by the U.S. imperialists in order to vilify the north Vietnamese people's support of their compatriots in the south. The Vietnamese nation is an integral whole, and as long as the United States occupies one inch of Vietnamese territory, the 31 million Vietnamese people have every right to mobilize themselves to drive out the aggressors. The Vietnam question is absolutely not a question of withdrawal by 'both sides,' nor the working out of any time-table...As for the Vietnamese people, they have no alternative except to fight to the finish for as long as the U.S. aggressor troops hang on in Vietnam...

There is yet another proposition: to end the Vietnam war, both sides must 'make sacrifices'...The so-called 'making sacrifices' by both sides is nothing but asking the Vietnamese people to sacrifice their independence and sovereignty in exchange for 'peace' under U.S. bayonets. This proposition is a gross insult to the Vietnamese people which they will never swallow.

In none of their variations of trickery have U.S. imperialism and its accomplices departed from their purpose of using the suspension of bombing the north as bait to have the Vietnamese people lay down their arms, and to make them abandon half-way their struggle against U.S. aggression and for national salvation...

When they fail to win by fighting, they resort to deception, and when they fail in their deception, they will resort to fighting. The new 'peace talks' deception which the U.S. imperialists are urgently trying to carry out at the current U.N. General Assembly session is again a smokescreen to cover up their further expansion of the war...

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The 'peace talks' hoax of the United States and the Soviet Union in the United Nations shows that they have gone a step further in their collusion over Vietnam." *("The U.N. Has No Right Whatever to Poke Its Nose into the Vietnam Question", Peking Review, IX, no. 40 (30 September 1966), pp. 29-31.)*

28-29 September-- Radio Hanoi broadcasts an interview with the President of the National Liberation Front, Nguyen Huu Tho, who states that the NLF's goal is to "found a broad democratic coalition government consisting of representatives of all social strata, nationalities, religious communities and patriotic personalities." He says that the new regime will back national sovereignty, realize the rights of freedom and democracy, put an end to US intervention and aggression, and achieve peace and neutrality in South Vietnam. On the following day, the DRV broadcasts a sweeping rejection of all American peace efforts and says the only way to end the conflict is for the United States to cease its "aggressions." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), pp. 198-99.)*

October-- A meeting of Soviet, East European, Mongolian and Cuban Communist leaders takes place in Moscow. Although the Communists take a tough public stand towards the United States, they reportedly agree in private that Hanoi should attend a peace conference and help make it possible by taking some action that would lead to an American bombing pause. *(Donald S. Zagoria, Vietnam Triangle (New York: Pegasus, 1967), p. 156.)*

October-- In an interview with Emmanuel D'Astier de la Vigerie, editor of the French Evenement, Ho Chi Minh notes that it is "imperative to mobilize the whole country for a long people's war against the U.S. aggressors..." In reply to a question about the possibility of receiving "volunteers" from friendly countries, he states: "The United States has a big economic and military potential. To defeat such an enemy, we first of all rely on our own strength, and at the same time strive to secure the most effective international assistance. The assistance and support given us by the fraternal socialist countries are particularly valuable. Hundreds of thousands of volunteers from the socialist and other countries have declared their readiness to fight the U.S. imperialists by our side... When necessary we shall ask them to come." As to the protest movement in the United States, this "gives an active support to our cause. Despite the government's persecution, the movement has not ceased to develop." The "peace negotiations" clamor of the American imperialists is only a smokescreen: "Yet, some

people of good will, deceived by U.S. propaganda, have advised us to negotiate with the aggressors at any cost. They have forgotten that to end this war, the United States only needs to undertake to withdraw. That is the only honourable solution for it." Ho repeats the DRV contention that the 4-points of the DRV and the 5-points of the NLF are the "true expression of the fundamental provisions of the Geneva Agreements in the present situation" and the "only correct basis for the settlement of the Vietnamese problem." *(Ho Chi Minh, "Interview Granted to Emmanuel D'Astier de la Vigerie, Editor of the French Evenement", Against U. S. Aggression, For National Salvation (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1967), pp. 131-34.)*

2 October-- A DRV Hoc Tap editorial declares that "our party has the duty to participate actively in the struggle to defend the lucidity of Marxism-Leninism against revisionism, which is the principal danger, and at the same time, against dogmatism and sectarianism; to struggle for the success of the Marxist-Leninist line within the international communist movement; and to contribute to restoring and strengthening the unity and unanimity of the international communist movement and of the socialist camp, on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism...To fulfill the above responsibility, our party must actively study the problems which have caused and are causing differences within the international communist and workers movements...Our party has a very great advantage, in that it is directly leading the struggle against the US imperialists—a struggle that has relations with almost all international problems. With this reality, our party has an even better ability to correctly understand international problems." As to the tasks confronting the Lao Dong Party: "While our southern compatriots are stepping up their armed and political struggles and are dealing the US aggressors and their lackeys fatal blows, our northern compatriots must strive to find every effective measure to defeat the US imperialists' war of destruction and to protect and accelerate the building of socialism, wholeheartedly and devotedly support the southern war of liberation, actively support the Laotian revolution, and, at the same time, prepare themselves and stand ready to cope with any eventuality." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 9 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), pp. 88-89.)*

4 October-- US Ambassador to Moscow Foy D. Kohler tells the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which is considering his nomination as Deputy Under Secretary of State, that to establish a blockade of North Vietnam would be a "dangerous step" because it would run the risk of a direct confrontation with the Soviet Union.

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(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 200.)

4 October-- U. Alexis Johnson, recently appointed Ambassador to Japan and former Deputy Under Secretary of State, addresses the Far East Conference on the subject of Communist China's loss of prestige in the economic and political fields. He believes that this may force China to a "live-and-let-live" policy toward the rest of the world. He points out that non-Communist Asian nations are making rapid economic advances, while the People's Republic has made no progress in GNP per capita since 1956. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 200.)*

6 October-- It is reported that an unaligned nation, which is represented in Hanoi, has informed the United States that the North Vietnamese Government would not consider a bombing pause to be a sufficient inducement to begin negotiations. A complete and unconditional cessation of air strikes will be necessary. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 200.)*

6 October-- A Hanoi Nhan Dan editorial comments on U Thant's proposals of 20 June:

"In the first point of his proposal, U Thant brought out an urgent demand of the world's people at present—that the United States must stop bombing North Viet Nam...

...While the first point proposed by U Thant conforms to the requirements for a settlement of the Viet Nam issue, the second point is obviously negative and clashes with the first. It negates the positive character of the first point, since U Thant has failed to make a distinction between the US imperialists, the aggressors, and the Vietnamese people, the victims of aggression. Hence his demands for a reduction by all parties of all military activities amounts to urging the Vietnamese people to reduce their struggle against aggression and for independence and freedom...

Certain religious circles, which have always chorused the US imperialists' peace song, have recently made pathetic appeals for peace in Viet Nam. Chiming in to Goldberg's tune, they said: Let's stop. Let's meet one another. Let's proceed to hold talks and negotiations with all sincerity.

Who will stop? The US aggressors, who are committing murders, or the Vietnamese people, who are defending their independence and freedom? And what kind of negotiations?

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Will they be unconditional negotiations, at a time when the United States is intensifying and expanding its war of aggression and sticking to its colonialist position. It is clear that these appeals are aimed only at forcing the Vietnamese people to give up their just struggle. Decidedly, such a thing can never happen.

As to the third point of U Thant's proposal: Those who are fighting in South Viet Nam against the US aggressors are none other than the South Vietnamese people, under the leadership of the NFLSV. The NFLSV is the sole genuine representative of the South Vietnamese people. By trying to ignore the role of the NFLSV, the US imperialists have themselves laid bare the falsity of their peace proposals.

Arthur J. Goldberg said at the United Nations that he saw no difficulty for the Viet Cong (NFLSV) to speak out their views. This showed the utter obstinacy of the United States in ignoring the hard fact that they are bumping their heads against the great fight conducted by the South Vietnamese people, who are led and organised by the NFLSV. U Thant himself has seen, but he dared not speak out straightforwardly.

The United Nations is being controlled by the US imperialists. It has no right whatsoever to interfere in the Viet Nam issue...

[Nevertheless] [w]e welcome any condemnation of the US aggression in Viet Nam at the UN General Assembly." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 9 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), pp. 96-97.)*

8 October-- The Soviet Union announces at the United Nations that it has rejected a British proposal that the two countries reconvene the Geneva Conference on Vietnam. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 200.)*

10 October-- The DRV armed forces newspaper Quan Doi Nhan Dan comments on a 6-point peace plan submitted by British Foreign Secretary George Brown:

"...Britain proposed that a cease-fire should be observed to hold negotiations and that elections should be held in both the South and North Viet Nam, then the governments chosen in the elections should freely decide if, when, and on what terms North and South Viet Nam should be united as a single state.

Britain proposed that these elections be held within a specified period of two years, and during that period, the US troops will

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remain in Viet Nam; they will only cease firing, but will not withdraw. This means that the election in South Viet Nam should be carried out at the gun points of well over 300,000 US aggressor troops.

Is there any difference between this proposal of Britain and that of the United States, which, while claiming that it is ready to let the Vietnamese people decide their destiny, continues to dispatch American troops to South Viet Nam?...

...In short, none of the six points raised by Brown differs in any way from the three points of Goldberg and the fourteen points of Johnson's sham peace proposal. They are opposed to the four-point stand of the DRV Government and the five-point statement of the NFLSV. Our people's stand is a just one, embodying in the most concentrated manner the main provisions of the 1954 Geneva agreements on Viet Nam."
(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 9 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), pp. 98-99.)

October-- The Soviets reveal their reaction to the 6-point peace proposal of the British Foreign Secretary George Brown during a meeting in the United States between Brown and Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko: Moscow will take no initiatives toward peace negotiations without prior authorization from Hanoi.
(Donald S. Zagoria, Vietnam Triangle (New York: Pegasus, 1967), p. 156.)

10 October-- A Peking Jenmin Jih Pao editorial discusses recent attempts to bring the United Nations into the Vietnam question:

"On September 22, Arthur G. Goldberg, U.S. delegate to the U.N., put forward the United States' so-called '3-point proposal' at the U.N. General Assembly session. Around this time, A. A. Gromyko and N. T. Fedorenko had long talks or lunched together with Lyndon Johnson and Dean Rusk. They professed to each other their belief that the Soviet Union and the United States were 'getting closer and closer together.' The two parties were fraternizing like real brothers...The result was a big crop of assorted 'peace talks' plans. The British Labour government gave out a so-called '6-point plan'; the Vatican issued a so-called 'peace' appeal; U.N. Secretary-General U Thant reiterated his '3-point' plan; and India and Yugoslavia also ran here and there peddling the 'peace talks' swindle. Everything points to a new and large-scale 'peace offensive' over the Vietnam question by U.S. imperialism and Soviet revisionism...

The first point in the U.S. proposal is that the United States may 'first cease its bombing of north Vietnam' on the condition

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that the Vietnamese people 'take corresponding and timely steps to reduce or bring to an end' their 'military activities.'

Divested of its wrappings, this point boils down to one word—deception. The only way to restore peace in Vietnam is to immediately withdraw all the U.S. armed forces and its followers' armed forces from Vietnam. It is not a question of temporarily stopping the bombing of the northern part of Vietnam. When Johnson began his massive bombing of north Vietnam in February last year, he aimed at forcing and inducing the Vietnamese people to accept 'peace talks.' His tactics were to alternately use bombings and a cessation of bombings. The bombing was to 'force peace talks' while a cessation was to 'induce peace talks.' If the 'bombing to force peace talks' had no effect, 'cessation of bombings to induce peace talks' was tried. The bombing-cessation trick has been played twice in the last year or so. Now the United States is having another try at cessation. People have long seen through these worn-out tactics.

It must be pointed out that while the bombing is blatant war blackmail, in no less sense is its cessation war blackmail. While the United States was handing outs its '3-point proposal,' the U.S. imperialists were frenziedly rushing more troops to south Vietnam and planning a new 'dry season offensive'...

The second point of the U.S. proposal is that 'the United States stands ready to withdraw its forces as others withdraw theirs' and that it is 'willing to agree to a time schedule' for the 'withdrawal from south Vietnam of all external forces.'

What absurdity, indeed! The only 'external forces' in Vietnam are the troops of U.S. imperialism and its accomplices...

The third point of the U.S. proposal is that 'the place of the Viet Cong in the negotiations' will not be 'an insurmountable problem.'

Many people who do not know the truth of the matter regard this as an American 'concession.' In truth it is a most dangerous hoax. The United States does not recognize the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation as the sole legal representative of the south Vietnamese people. All the United States has said is that the N.F.L. may have a chair at the conference table laid by the Americans and sit together with the U.S. puppets from Saigon. Here U.S. imperialism is trying to copy the old trick of the triumvirate in Laos, in order to gain what it cannot gain on the battlefield through a so-called coalition government.

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It must be pointed out that the seemingly neutral '3-point' plan [see 20 June entry] of U.N. Secretary-General U Thant is in fact a wholly American product...The first point in U Thant's plan is 'cessation of the bombing of north Vietnam' while the first point in the American proposal is 'cease its bombing of north Vietnam.' The only point of difference is the United States states more explicitly the conditions for the cessation of bombings while U Thant buries his conditions in his so-called second point on the reduction of 'military activities' by both sides...U Thant's reduction of 'military activities' by both sides is a twin version of the American second point on troop withdrawal by both sides. U Thant's third point is 'the participation of the National Liberation Front in any peaceful settlement' while the third point in the U.S. proposal says that 'the place of the Viet Cong in the negotiations' is not 'an insurmountable problem.' See, aren't U Thant's '3-point' plan and the U.S. '3-point proposal' exactly the same?

...The Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation have stated clearly and repeatedly that the United Nations has no right to meddle in the Vietnam question. All countries with a sense of justice should resolutely support the Vietnamese people's just stand and resolutely oppose U.S. imperialism and Soviet revisionism's use of the United Nations to intervene in the Vietnam question." *(Text in Donald S. Zagoria, Vietnam Triangle (New York: Pegasus, 1967), pp. 207-10.)*

10-26 October-- On 10 October, Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs Paul Martin urges the USSR to authorize specific new functions to strengthen the International Control Commission as the initial step toward peace in Vietnam. Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko responds that Moscow will not enter peace talks without a prior mandate from Hanoi. He states that a halt to the bombing of North Vietnam is "the essential precondition" to any diplomatic move towards peace; that this halt must be unilateral, with no reciprocal action required of the DRV; and that the halt must be indicated to be only the first step toward the withdrawal of American troops. On 26 October, the communique issued at the Tito-Nasser-Gandhi summit meeting in Belgrade calls for an "immediate" and "unconditional' bombing halt, fulfillment of the 1954 Geneva Agreements, withdrawal of all foreign troops from Vietnam and participation of the NLF in peace talks. The Soviet newspaper Pravda terms this a realistic approach toward an understanding of the conditions prevailing in Southeast Asia." Peking denounces the statement. *(Donald S. Zagoria, Vietnam Triangle (New York: Pegasus, 1967), p. 156.)*

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16 October-- The New York Times reports Leonid Brezhnev, First Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party as saying: "We have declared many times that if the United States wants to develop mutually beneficial relations with the Soviet Union—in principle, we also would like this—it is necessary to clear major obstacles from the path. The piratical bombing attacks against a socialist country, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, must be halted and the aggression against the Vietnam people stopped." *(Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs, Mission to Hanoi (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), p. 339.)*

23 October-- An official "Observer" editorial in Peking's People's Daily claims that at his 10 October meeting with President Johnson, Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko informed the American leader that the Vietnam problem could "be solved" providing the US brought about a "pause in the bombing of north Vietnam." It makes the following accusation: "By their collaboration in forcing 'peace talks' through a 'pause in the bombing' at the expense of Vietnam, the United States and the Soviet Union are vainly trying to bring about a new Eastern Munich so as to oppose the Vietnamese people, encircle China and suppress the Asian national-liberation movement. We must thoroughly expose this and firmly oppose it...The United States and the Soviet Union have jointly conspired over a long period the fraud of forcing 'peace talks' through a 'pause in the bombing.' The 'temporary suspension of bombing' trick played by the United States at the end of last year was an invention of the Soviet leading group." Peking repeats its support for the DRV 4-point plan and the NLF 5-point statement and notes that the United States "is now trying, by means of blackmail of a 'pause in the bombing' of North Vietnam, to achieve its criminal aim of continued occupation of south Vietnam and to get what it has failed to obtain on the battlefield." *("Observer", "Expose the U.S.-Soviet Plot for a New Eastern Munich", Peking Review, IX, no. 44 (28 October 1966), p. 7.)*

25 October-- Following the 7-nation Manila Summit Conference attended by the United States, South Vietnam, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines and South Korea, the following general goals are defined for allied policy: "1. To be free from aggression. 2. To conquer hunger, illiteracy, and disease. 3. To build a region of security, order, and progress. 4. To seek reconciliation and peace throughout Asia and the Pacific." *(Public Papers of the Presidents, Lyndon B. Johnson, 1966 (Washington: GPO, 1967), vol 2, pp. 1259-1265.)*

27 October-- Peking's People's Daily calls the 7-nation Manila Conference an "out and out war council". This same day, the

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Lao Dong newspaper Nhan Dan states: "These documents adopted by the United States and its henchmen at the conference have pointed to the following four points in the US scheme against Viet Nam: To step up and expand the aggressive war against Viet Nam; The United States and its agents will increase aid to the Saigon puppets to carry out their plan for rural pacification and economic and social development; To urge the Vietnamese people to accept their insolent conditions for a peaceful settlement; To rig up a regional organization composed of the United States and its henchmen with a view to opposing the people of Viet Nam and Asia...Thus, the Manila conference has brought to the open the US maneuver to press its satellites to send more youths of their countries as cannonfodder to South Viet Nam. The conference was part of the US scheme to intensify and expand its aggressive war in Viet Nam and use Asians to fight Asians. The so-called plan for rural pacification and economic development in South Viet Nam was already contained in Johnson's speech early this year at the Honolulu conference. It lies in the US stick-and-carrot policy which has failed and is doomed to more bitter failure...In the so-called search for a peaceful settlement in South Viet Nam dealt with in the communique, the US aggressors urged that the South Vietnamese people stop their struggle for independence and freedom, and that the North Vietnamese people cease supporting their southern compatriots. Six months after these conditions have been fulfilled, the United States and its satellites would withdraw their troops from South Viet Nam...[This] is a demand for the Vietnamese people to lay down their arms and surrender to the US aggressors. It also means that the United States will withdraw its troops and leave behind advisers only when their stooges have consolidated their rule in South Viet Nam and South Viet Nam has become a new-type colony of the United States... The Manila conference has also revealed the US imperialists' scheme to rally its lackeys into a military alliance to serve the aggressive and war provocative plans of the United States in Viet Nam at present and in other areas in Asia in the future. The joint communique of the Manila conference said that the United States and its satellites and puppets would hold regular meetings of ambassadors of the participants of the conference in Saigon and of foreign ministers of these countries when necessary...Like the Manila conference itself, this consultative machinery is a US maneuver aimed at putting on the US-war of aggression in Viet Nam a collective label which would dim the aggressive features of the US imperialists." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 9 (Canberra: GPO, 1966), pp. 110-12.)*

28 October-- President de Gaulle denounces US policy in Vietnam at his press conference. He says: "We find it totally detestable

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that a small country should be bombed by a very big one, and we find it not less detestable that the soldiers of both sides should suffer losses." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 203.)*

November-- During the Bulgarian Party Congress, a high official informs Western correspondents that the Soviet Bloc's main aim is to bring about a Vietnam peace conference. He adds that preconditions, such as an end to the bombing, are "of no great importance." *(Donald S. Zagoria, Vietnam Triangle (New York: Pegasus, 1967), p. 156.)*

November-- Writing to Lord Bertrand Russell concerning Russell's plans to set up an "International Tribunal" to try the "war crimes" of the "US imperialists", Ho Chi Minh notes that the "formal indictment of these crimes by the International Tribunal will arouse universal indignation against the U.S. aggressors and intensify the protest movement of the peoples of all countries demanding the cessation of this criminal war and the withdrawal of U.S. and satellite troops from Vietnam ...The Tribunal will contribute to awakening the conscience of the world peoples who are opposing the U.S. imperialists... Our people...wholeheartedly support your noble initiative." *(Ho Chi Minh, "Message to Lord Bertrand Russell", Against U.S. Aggression, For National Salvation (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1967), pp. 135-36.)*

7 November-- A People's Daily editorial comments that one goal of President Johnson's recent Asian tour was to "rig up a new anti-China alliance to replace the ramshackle SEATO and the Manila Conference was the first step towards realising this plot." The editorial accuses the US President of using a "'peace' smokescreen to cover up the stepped-up US war adventure, bribe the Asian hirelings of the United States with dollars into serving as its pawns against China and expedite preparations for a military attack on China...Apart from military encirclement and armed threats against China, US imperialism is still dreaming of subverting China by means of 'peaceful evolution'. Johnson's remarks at East-West centre in Honolulu on October 17 contains the undisguised instigation that in China 'the pragmatic and compassionate spirit...will prevail over outmoded dogmatism'. The United States hopes for 'a freer flow' with China, he said. US papers have bluntly admitted that these remarks by Johnson were addressed to those in China who are in 'opposition to Mao Tse-Tung'..." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 11 (Canberra: GPO, 1967), p. 1.)*

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14 November-- Pathet Lao Prince Souphanouvong charges that the National Assembly elections (proposed for 1 January 1967) are an American ruse to get the rightists into better political positions in Laos so that the US can use troops against North Vietnam's supply lines to South Vietnam. In a letter to Premier Souvanna Phouma, he declares that such an election would be "illegal, secessionist and reactionary." *(New York Times, 19 and 28 November, pp. 4 and 19 respectively.)*

21 November-- General William C. Westmoreland, in an interview for U.S. News & World Report, says that the North Vietnamese are infiltrating the South at an increased rate of 7,000 per month despite heavy US bombing attacks. He says that "the initiative has swung to our side," but notes that "we will need more troops." He adds: "The enemy thinks in terms of protracted conflict. We must also think in terms of a protracted commitment." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 206.)*

23 November-- The VC Radio Liberation evaluates the military and political situation in South Vietnam. It suggests: "The factor which determines our fate lies in the comparative balance of forces and the combat position on the battlefield. Speaking on this basis, the Manila conference was a great swindle that was aimed at covering up the US aggressors' disastrous defeats on the battlefields of both North and South Viet-Nam...In their plot to internationalise the war, the US aggressors have only succeeded in dragging along some half-man, half-ape lackeys. As for their best allies, they have either opposed them or paid only lip service...Only if the US Government puts an end to its aggressive war against Viet Nam, withdraws all US and satellite troops as well as all war instruments from South Viet-Nam, ceases its air raids against the North unconditionally and permanently, and allows the Vietnamese people to solve their problems by themselves in accordance with the Geneva Agreements and the South Viet-Nam National Liberation Front political platform, would peace immediately be restored in our country. At present, there have not yet been any indications that the US aggressors want to renounce their aggression. Therefore, our people remain determined to struggle. As long as the US aggressors and their satellites still remain in our country, we cannot speak of real peace." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 11 (Canberra: GPO, 1967), pp. 3-4.)*

29 November-- In a speech given in Peking at a reception for the Albanian Ambassador to China, Chou En-lai accuses the Soviets

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of making "unbridled attacks on the Chinese Communist Party" and inciting "a new anti-China wave in a vain attempt to carry through the scheme to isolate and deal blows at China in co-ordination with the United States." *("Premier Chou Sternly Warns U.S. Imperialists and Soviet Revisionists: You Will Never Succeed in Your Counter-Revolutionary Conspiracy", Peking Review, IX, no. 49 (2 December 1966), p. 11.)*

November 1966-May 1967-- Patrick J. McGarvey of the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, writing in his book Visions of Victory, discusses the VC-Hanoi debates over the 1966-1967 dry season offensive:

"Not long after the dry season campaign got under way, another Cuu Long article...appearing on November 29, 1966, revealed a great deal of discontent among the Viet Cong. Cuu Long seems to have recognized at the outset that Thanh [Nguyen Chi Thanh, North Vietnamese commander of the VC forces in South Vietnam] had no intention of changing his basic strategy, and he reacted immediately by publicly assailing Thanh's general disregard for guerrilla forces. Cuu Long lectured his audience with a rehearsal of all the standard dicta on the utility of guerrilla tactics. He awakened his audience midway through his treatise, however, by jabbing at the 'unrealistic leadership' that failed to see the strategic significance of guerrilla forces. The major problem, in his view, was the poor organization of all the forces at the Communists' command. Thanh was wrong in thinking that he could wage a strictly conventional war, and that guerrillas existed merely to 'provide services.' Guerrilla units, he reminded Thanh, are the basis of revolutionary war, and they must not 'fight alone.' Thanh had failed to develop all three levels of the Communist force structure—guerrilla, local, and main forces—so that each could fulfill its separate function. Thanh, it seems, did not totally ignore guerrilla and local forces, but rather used them primarily as manpower pools for his main forces. Cuu Long argued that the guerrillas and local forces consisted of 'many resourceful components,' which should be coordinated with the main forces.

Cuu Long hinted that Thanh's cavalier attitude had created serious morale problems among the Viet Cong guerrillas, particularly the political cadres, whom Thanh apparently held in low esteem. Local guerrilla forces were unable to understand exactly what their function was because of 'the problems of leadership.' The leadership had to provide guidance on this problem or the war movement would fail, Cuu Long insisted. He listed specific complaints and called on the Communist leaders to recognize the role and nature of guerrilla warfare

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so that they 'can avoid erroneous concepts such as the idea of depending on concentrated troops.' They must also 'pay attention to organizing the force structure at the basic level from both the political and the military viewpoint.' A coordinated approach to warfare, using all three force levels, was urgently needed. Cuu Long's repeated, impassioned calls for 'urgent ideological work' suggest that local morale was very low. Cuu Long closed with expressions of confidence that the problems he had cited would be corrected, and a request for an exchange of views on the issues he had raised.

Within two weeks Cuu Long's article had provoked a reply. Broadcast by the clandestine Liberation Radio in South Vietnam on December 12, 1966, the anonymous commentary was entitled 'The Front's Correct Line is the Strength and Faith of Our South Vietnamese People.' It seemed clearly to represent Thanh's refusal to discuss the issues raised by Cuu Long. The commentary insisted that all was well, and, without refering to Cuu Long's complaints, it listed the Front's alleged accomplishments, an indirect way of claiming that the salient points of his critique were well understood and his recommendations fully implemented. The broadcast emphasized that guerrilla warfare had been coordinated with main-force actions, and pointed to the shelling of Saigon during the November 1 National Day celebrations as one of the high points of the year. It ignored Cuu Long's references to morale problems among Southern cadres, and seemed to dismiss all the issues he had raised as minor. It seems clear that at this point, when the dry-season campaign was just picking up momentum, Thanh was not interested in diverting his attention from the tasks ahead to a major review of his strategy.

Ten days later Radio Hanoi countered by replaying selected highlights from Cuu Long's list of complaints. The broadcast reiterated his basic point that guerrilla forces did not exist solely to support regular forces, and went on to claim, as Cuu Long had, that guerrillas were responsible for one-third to two-fifths of enemy casualties in the past year. The guerrillas had proved their efficiency, the broadcast claimed, by countering elements, such as South Vietnamese intelligence operatives, that large regular units could not handle. Urban terrorism, the ambushing of American supply convoys, and the other guerrilla accomplishments that Cuu Long had enumerated were described as 'testifying to the boundless potential of guerrilla warfare.'

With this broadcast a lengthy period of official silence set in, which lasted until the close of the 1966-67 dry season."

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(Patrick J. McGarvey, Visions of Victory (Stanford: Stanford University, 1969), pp. 15-17; Text of Cuu Long article in Ibid., pp. 101-13.)

December-- Oleg Hoeffding, in a Rand report prepared for ISA, evaluates the American bombing of North Vietnam. He says:

"From the start of the U.S. air offensive against North Vietnam, the Hanoi government appears to have disbelieved protestations by the United States that its threat was a limited one in terms of targets and political objectives. Not only Hanoi's reporting and propaganda but also its actions indicated that it expected the United States to proceed to massive attacks on economic and population targets. Taken together, these actions added up to an urgent, comprehensive, and determined crash program to prepare the country for unrestricted air attack and possible ground invasion, and for a war of indefinite duration.

This effort, combined with the effects of the bombing, has imposed severe strain on North Vietnam's physical and organizational resources. The most tangible manifestation of this strain has been a massive diversion of manpower to military and other war-related unproductive activities. Inroads on the agricultural labor force have been particularly serious. Together with other effects of the war on agriculture they have seriously impaired the country's ability to feed itself in a long war; and by now there is evidence of urban food shortages and increasing food imports.

There is, however, no evidence of critical or progressive deterioration or disruption of economic activity. This reflects that Hanoi has reaped substantial benefits from its response to what, up to mid-1966 at least, was an exaggerated threat assessment. Much of the demand on resources generated by the war effort amounted to investment activity—civil defense, AA defense infrastructure, military mobilization—which, once completed, generates relatively low-cost and sustained benefits. There has also been a large and valuable investment in learning, practice, and experience in coping with the tasks and problems imposed by war; a process that was assisted by the specialized and repetitive nature of the U.S. air offensive. Further, Hanoi succeeded in attracting increasing military and economic aid from its allies, China as well as the USSR, and retained access to these imports. Finally, and apparently on an increased scale in recent months, Hanoi has carried out a large program of evacuation and dispersal of urban population, industrial equipment and—to some unknown extent—administrative agencies.

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As to the effects of the war on public morale and the effectiveness of government control, the cautious guess should be that they have redounded to the regime's net benefit. The bombing specifically has probably produced enough incidental damage and civilian casualties to assist the government in maintaining anti-American militancy, and not enough to be seriously depressing or disaffecting. The war situation itself puts the regime in a strong position to prevent whatever discontent or potential disaffection may exist from being translated into passive or active disobedience. Military and paramilitary mobilization will have greatly strengthened the internal security apparatus. The national emergency enables the regime to resort to coercion where in peacetime it might be constrained to persuasion. It also makes the population more dependent on the government for essential goods and services, and ability to supply or withhold them becomes a potent instrument of control.

In short, there is no evidence at present that economically and politically Hanoi should not be able to withstand the long, hard war it professes to have in mind...

Even if the constraints were significantly relaxed—but not entirely abandoned—and the air offensive were extended to include all military targets not hitherto attacked and all or most of North Vietnam's modern-sector industry, Hanoi might well remain in a position to supply and move the very limited flow of personnel and material to the South apparently required to save the VC-PAVN forces there from conclusive defeat in the foreseeable future. However, an essential condition for Hanoi's being able to do so would be continued access to military and economic aid imports from its Communist allies. Hanoi's expectation that such aid (and postwar reconstruction aid) will remain available and accessible may provide the principal rational underpinning to Hanoi's seeming determination to invite much larger destruction than it has suffered yet by persisting in its intransigent stand.

U.S. failure to date to undertake a maximum effort to deny access to imports by sea and overland—attributable, evidently, mainly to the fear of provoking and activating the USSR and China—thus emerges as the outstanding gap in the logic of U.S. coercive strategy against North Vietnam." *(Oleg Hoeffding, Bombing North Vietnam: An Appraisal of Economic and Political Effects (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, RM-5213-1-ISA, 1966), pp. v-vii.)*

December-- Hoang Minh Thao, a leading Lao Dong Party member, reaffirms the need for a policy of self-reliance in the theoretical

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journal Hoc Tap: "It is necessary to uphold the self-reliant spirit while trying to win the sympathy and support of the socialist bloc and the people of the world. The revolution of each country is the private affair of the people of the country concerned. However, it cannot be separated from the world revolution. The revolution in our country led by the proletariat is an indispensable element of the international proletarian revolution. Thus, to prosecute the revolutionary war in our country, our people must rely mainly on our own forces, but the support and assistance of the socialist bloc and the world is very vital. However, only when our people fully exploit our own forces can this support and assistance, both spiritual and material, of the people of other countries show its effect." Notably, no mention is made of Lin Piao's warning of a possible cut-off in aid. At the same time, the North Vietnamese state their claim to having made unique contributions to the doctrine of people's war: "The people's war outlook of our party is a new, creative development of the Marxist-Leninist ideas of revolutionary violence and revolutionary war. It is the most fundamental concept of our party's military line...Being an advanced scientific study in revolutionary wars, our theory on the people's war is clearly superior to any reactionary military 'theory' of the bourgeoisie and all misleading military concepts..." No doubt, this claim caused some eyebrow raising among Maoist readers. *(Text in Hoc Tap (Study), December 1966.)*

3-14 December-- On 3 December, the DRV Foreign Ministry condemns the US raids on Hanoi of the previous day and states that the Vietnamese people will resolutely fight "till complete victory whatever the sacrifices and hardships may be." Additional raids on Hanoi on 13 and 14 December bring a similar response from the North Vietnamese on 14 December. *(Peking Review, IX, nos. 50 and 52 (9 and 23 December 1966), pp. 23, 9 respectively.)*

5-15 December-- On 5 December, the Chinese Foreign Ministry condemns the "pirate raids" of US airplanes on Hanoi, which occurred on 2 and 4 December. The Ministry statement claims: "None of its tricks—whether it be 'forcing peace talks through bombing' or 'inducing peace talks through bombing pause,' whether it be 'escalation' or 'de-escalation'—can ever shake the Vietnamese people's determination to carry the fight through to the end." The Chinese people, it is said, "will not flinch from maximum national sacrifices in support of the fraternal Vietnamese people." As usual, no specific Chinese commitments are made. Subsequently, additional raids on Hanoi on 13-14 December draw a similar denunciation from the Foreign Ministry on 15 December. *(Texts in Peking Review, IX, nos. 50 and 52 (9 and 23 December 1966), pp. 23, 8-9 respectively.)*

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November-December-- John Hightower of the Associated Press reports that Hanoi and Washington had agreed through a Polish intermediary to meet for secret discussions in Warsaw. The Poles claim, however, that the US bombing of Hanoi made the DRV back out. Washington, on the other hand, argues that the North Vietnamese merely used the bombing as a pretext for not coming. *(Donald S. Zagoria, Vietnam Triangle (New York: Pegasus, 1967), p. 157.)*

6 December-- While visiting Lyons, France, Soviet Premier Kosygin tells reporters that he sees a "community of interests" between the US and the Soviet Union, but adds: "The United States is bombing defenseless people in Viet Nam. We don't see any indication of the way the United States is going to end the war. If it were ended, relations would improve...We want a better understanding with the United States." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 208.)*

8 December-- A Franco-Soviet communique issued on the occasion of the visit of Premier Kosygin to France notes that the Vietnam situation "has equally endangered neighbouring states and constitutes at present the main obstacle to international *detente* as well as to the establishment of lasting peaceful relations between many countries. The two governments have agreed on continuing to compare their positions and to exchange views on this matter." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 11 (Canberra: GPO, 1967), pp. 7-8.)*

16 December-- The People's Republic of China charges that United States planes seriously damaged Peking's Embassy in Hanoi on 14 December. The Rumanian Embassy and offices of the New China news agency in Hanoi are also said to have suffered damage. A Chinese statement warns the United States that it would "certainly receive redoubled punishment for your crime." In Washington, a State Department spokesman replies: "The Department of Defense has informed us that there is no basis for allegations that U.S. ordnance fell on the city of Hanoi." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 210.)*

18 December-- A mass rally is held in Peking to denounce the US bombing of Hanoi. Pledges are made that the "Chinese people are fully prepared. We are ready to march to the front any time the Vietnamese people require..." Foreign Minister Chen Yi reiterates that the struggle in Vietnam has become "the focal point" of the worldwide "anti-imperialist" struggle: "The Vietnamese people know quite well that they are fighting

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not only for their own national liberation and the unification of the motherland but also for the revolutionary cause of the oppressed nations and people throughout the world. Their struggle is a just, progressive, and sacred one...fully developing the powerful strength of people's war. They have smashed the attacks of the U.S. aggressors and exposed the true nature of U.S. imperialism as a paper tiger. The struggle and victories of the Vietnamese people are a glory not only of the Vietnamese people but also of the people of the whole world. At present, the focal point of world struggle against U.S. imperialism lies in Vietnam, and the Vietnam war against U.S. aggression and for national salvation is of great and far-reaching world significance." Moreover, because of Vietnam's broader meaning, he says, every support has to be given the people's war there. China's efforts in that direction are not being matched, however, by Moscow. The USSR is accused of pursuing the "capitulationist line of modern revisionism and national egoism" which gives "sham support but real betrayal" in flagrant contradiction of the spirit of proletarian internationalism. *(Texts in Peking Review, IX, no. 52 (23 December 1966), pp. 12-15.)*

22 December-- The DRV's Nhan Dan reports that on 13 and 14 December "more than 100 civilians in Hanoi were killed or wounded and many houses destroyed or burned down by US bombs and bullets..." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 11 (Canberra: GPO, 1967), p. 13.)*

23 December-- Ho Chi Minh issues a message to the American people. He says that the "U.S. Government wrongly believes that with brutal force it could compel the people to surrender. But the Vietnamese people will never submit...More and more Americans are valiantly standing up in a vigorous struggle, demanding that the American Government respect the Constitution and the honour of the United States, stop the war of aggression in Vietnam and bring home all U.S. troops...I warmly welcome your just struggle and thank you for your support to the Vietnamese people's patriotic fight." *(Ho Chi Minh, "Message to the American People", Against U.S. Aggression, For National Salvation (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1967), p. 138.)*

24 December-- Harrison E. Salisbury, an assistant managing editor of The New York Times, who has entered North Vietnam aboard an aircraft operated by the International Control Commission on Vietnam, writes that the American raids of 13 and 14 December caused damage at the center of Hanoi. He says that US bombing has been inflicting "considerable civilian casualties in Hanoi and its environs for some time past."

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(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 212.)

30 December-- Sot Petrasy, Pathet Lao representative in Vientiane, states in an interview that the Laotian Communists are not planning to set up a separate government in opposition to Souvanna Phouma's neutralist-rightist coalition. "Our policy," he says, "remains the same. It is to hold the liberated areas and seek a settlement through negotiations." *(New York Times, 31 December 1966, p. 3.)*

30 December-- British Foreign Secretary George Brown, in notes to his governmental counterparts in the United States, North and South Vietnam and the USSR and to UN Secretary General U Thant, calls for immediate cease-fire discussions between representatives of the United States and North and South Vietnam. The Soviets respond by terming the Brown proposal a political maneuver to quiet criticism of Harold Wilson's support of US policy in Vietnam. Izvestia also claims that the proposal is intended to aid Washington, which "has come under fire from world opinion" because of the bombing of population centers in North Vietnam. The US and the RVN accept Brown's proposal; Hanoi rejects it. *(Donald S. Zagoria, Vietnam Triangle (New York: Pegasus, 1967), p. 157.)*

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January-- The Soviet-oriented international journal World Marxist Review publishes a "survey of world communist opinion." It declares that "[c]urrent events in Vietnam make it more urgent than ever for the world Communist movement and the socialist community to take united action in support of Vietnam." In an obvious reference to the Chinese, the journal states that the "Communist and Workers' parties regard the attitude towards unity of action in the face of the imperialist gamble in Vietnam as the decisive criterion of devotion to the ideals of progress and revolution. They emphatically condemn all disruptive activity over this issue, and regard all rejection of united action, all neutrality and lack of initiative on this point as incompatible with the name of Communist." *(Jan Prazsky, "For Communist Unity Against U.S. Aggression", World Marxist Review, X, no. 1 (January 1967), pp. 74-75.)*

January-- Patrick J. McGarvey of the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace comments in his book Visions of Victory on a speech given this month by Vo Nguyen Giap concerning the DRV "self-defense militia". He states:

"Although many North Vietnamese officers voiced public concern over a future invasion of North Vietnam, no military man

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seriously came to grips with the problem in public until January 1967, when Defense Minister Vo Nguyen Giap addressed a military conference in North Vietnam...He not only admitted the possibility of invasion, but directed that nationwide attention be given to it. In a situation in which increasing labor shortages were being felt in all sectors, this directive represented a major decision on his part, for the implementation of it would inevitably aggravate manpower problems. Giap's directives not only spelled out the steps to be taken, but more important, reflected his desire to control the form that defense of the North would take in the event of an invasion. Not surprisingly, Giap focused on the basic level of the Vietnamese Communist military apparatus—the guerrilla, or in his terms, the 'self-defense militia'...

The profound effect of the war on the population of North Vietnam emerges clearly from Giap's discourse on the 'self-defense militia,' an organization whose very existence has always been a creature of war. Though Giap would have us believe that the militia is a permanently functioning component of the North Vietnamese military establishment, his historical treatment of its role suggests otherwise...

Giap's description of the activities of these militia units can stand as a description of the activities of the entire civilian population of North Vietnam, for, mobilized by the local party chapter, militia units exist in every village, on every city block, and in every factory and government office. The military tasks of the militiamen are superimposed on their normal work loads in factory and field. Giap indicates that the militia forces are engaged primarily in two major tasks: air defense and transport. They serve as an early warning system, manning ground observer posts throughout the country and sounding the alarm when planes are spotted. When the alarm sounds, militiamen armed with rifles take predesignated positions and fire at whatever targets may appear. Giap claims that of the 1,600 American aircraft downed over North Vietnam by January 1967—a patently exaggerated figure—one hundred were brought down by rifle fire from militia posts. Whatever the true figure, small-arms fire from militia posts probably does account for some American losses. Other militia units assist local security troops in capturing downed American fliers. Giap praises members of coastal fishing cooperatives for putting out to sea to capture pilots. Other militiamen are assigned to regular army units in their area, with some of them serving as munition carriers for anti-aircraft units. Militia units spent 'millions of workdays,' in Giap's words, constructing anti-aircraft, missile, and coastal artillery sites. They also dug communication trenches, air-raid shelters, and ammunition pits. In urban areas militiamen on each block apparently serve as

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air-raid wardens, ensuring that residents respond to alerts. They also guard against looting and serve as damage-control parties in the event of bomb damage.

The militia's role in transportation is wide-ranging and varied. Giap paints a picture of thousands of people functioning as coolie labor to ensure the flow of materiel south. Roads subjected to constant aerial harassment must be under constant repair, and it is the self-defense militia that fills bomb craters, constructs by-passes of destroyed bridges, builds detours or new roads around interdiction or trans-shipment points, and unloads and carries goods from one form of transport, such as trucks, to another, such as barges or rail cars. Other militiamen have the dubious honor of 'deactivating time bombs,' while still others work to camouflage vehicles and keep them operative.

Giap implies that some North Vietnamese leaders had feared that the diversion of so much energy to war-related tasks would disrupt the economy. Their fears, he says, have proved unwarranted; the militia units have served as 'the shock troops' of the production line—an assertion he would have had a hard time trying to prove, given North Vietnam's progressively shrinking rice harvests in the last two years.

Giap's detailed discussion of the militia's activity made clear two important points about the relations of government and society in North Vietnam: the extent of the Hanoi government's control over the population, and the regime's apparent self-confidence with regard to internal dissent. As for the first, with the increasing demands for human labor caused by American air attacks, the government soon realized that the established machinery of control—the party and local security forces—was inadequate, and it thereupon revived and expanded the largely dormant self-defense militia or guerrilla apparatus throughout the country. Staffed and led by party members, the militia gave the government a vehicle for directing and controlling the labor of thousands, and at the same time allowed it to keep its finger on the popular pulse, an opportunity that facilitated the decision to arm the populace. This decision gave irrefutable testimony to the regime's confidence in public support; it would have been foolhardy indeed to distribute arms to a hostile or even seriously discontented populace...Giap's directives for home defense in the event of an invasion are based on the regime's fundamental assumption of sufficient popular support and government control to make the self-defense militia feasible.

Characteristically, Giap couched his plans for future military strategy in purposely evasive language, from which only a few very general attitudes can be inferred. Essentially he seemed

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intent on molding a defensive military position in the North. He did not consider the possibility of victory of any sort, and the type of preparations he proposed seemed designed for a protracted and grueling war of attrition against an enemy invader, fought largely in local clashes with no definable fronts. Men and women alike would fight in every village. He stated, curiously, that 'at present we do not need a large standing army in the North,' but self-defense militia forces were to be made 'remarkably strong' because when an invasion occurred, there would be no difference between the front and the rear. Local forces—those which operate in company and battalion size at the province level—were to build themselves up to a point where they could engage in major battles in their areas. While he admitted that regular forces must also be built up, Giap obviously would prefer to fight a fluid, no-front war in the North as in the South, with regular and guerrilla forces sharing the major combat role.

In Giap's view the expansion of the self-defense militia was facilitated by several favorable conditions, among them the people's patriotism and their 'profound love of socialism'. Although the revolutionary ardor of some North Vietnamese has been heightened by the war, it is doubtful that the war has led the people of North Vietnam as a whole to cultivate the profound love of socialism of which Giap speaks. Giap indirectly conceded as much by citing the strength of the party organization, 'down to the village cell,' as the key instrument in the expansion of the self-defense militia. It is this chain of command, this direct contact with the entire population of North Vietnam, rather than the putative ideological fervor of the masses, that Giap relied upon. Confidence in the party as a control mechanism, together with the natural hostility of the populace toward the American air campaign, made possible the decision to expand the guerrilla structure.

Once the decision to distribute arms was taken, the most urgent need was the arms themselves—and thanks to Communist China and the Soviet Union, they were plentiful...The need for such weapons has risen in proportion to the involvement in the South of North Vietnamese ground forces, but by 1967, Giap implied, arms inventories in the North had reached the point where local units, armed with handmade single-shot rifles or World War II carbines, could be reequipped with modern submachine guns and assault rifles, and more people could be armed. In perpetuation of the distinctive Vietnamese way, however, the old weapons would not be discarded, but redistributed, and the capacity to manufacture crude weapons would be not only sustained but expanded—perhaps as insurance against future difficulties with either the Chinese or the Soviets.

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Giap emphasized that many of the tactics used in the South could be applied to the defense of the North. He lauded equally the fighting of pitched battles by large, concentrated forces and the use of smaller forces in rear-guard and harassing actions, suggesting that the self-defense militia would be trained in both. Giap could not resist coining yet another slogan in describing the goal to which the militia's training would be directed: 'Every citizen is an enemy-killing combatant; every house is a combat cell; every village or factory is a fortress; every chi bo [basic party unit] is a leader of the anti-U.S. National Salvation Front.' Once this slogan was implemented, he asserted, the North would be prepared for the invasion.

The responsibility for implementing the slogan was left to local party units, who were urged to achieve all the militia's stated objectives, 'but not at the expense of agricultural production.' Cadres were directed to assess their local situation and establish priorities and schedules. Existing air-defense and transport programs were to continue.

From the viewpoint of the already overburdened civilian work force, perhaps the most demanding of Giap's directives were his calls for the construction of 'combat villages' and the training of villagers for local defense. The combat village has long been a dream of Giap's. He envisions every hamlet, every village, as a complex of defense fortifications, connected to neighboring hamlets by a series of trenches. Each combat village would fight to the last ditch, with survivors fighting a rear-guard defense while moving on to the adjoining village. For each of these combat villages, party cadres were to devise a workable plan for the construction of defense fortifications, trench systems, and strong points. Further, they were to work out a training program that was appropriate to the local terrain and that would enable the villagers to best defend themselves. This training would, moreover, prepare local forces to support provincial and regular forces. In other words, local party cadres were to develop a series of physical defenses and train the population to man them, and in addition train the villagers as reserve platoons and squads that could support provincial battalions and regular forces in large-scale clashes.

Giap did not ignore the tremendous efforts his compatriots were already making; he proposed to solve the manpower problem by inducing more women to join the active ranks of the self-defense militia. A widespread recruiting campaign would emphasize women's traditional fighting role in Vietnamese history. Further, an educational campaign among the militia units would emphasize the government subsidies provided militiamen and their families.

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The party's policy of allotments for killed or wounded soldiers was to be 'fully enforced,' a remark suggesting that these benefits had not been given to all militia families who suffered losses. In Giap's words, the provision for their families would 'put the troops' minds at ease while they are fighting the enemy.'

Giap closed by reminding the party cadres that, in addition to all their other duties, the militia units were to serve as the 'shock troops' of economic production. He admitted that there would be difficult times ahead, but gave the cadres little from which to draw comfort. The responsibility was theirs, and as is so often the case in a Communist country, if the goals are not reached, the fault will be theirs, too.

Since these remarks by Giap in January 1967, there have been only occasional references to the self-defense militia in the party press, and at present there is no accurate way to gauge how Giap's directives have fared. The prospects for such wide-ranging programs, even in peacetime, would appear dim. Under the constantly increasing pressure of American air attacks, which have had an immeasurable, cumulative effect on all aspects of life in North Vietnam, these prospects seem nil. The history of the Vietnamese Communist movement, however, is studded with wide-ranging programs calling for unrealistic goals. Perhaps such unrealistic goals are set primarily to ensure the fulfillment of lesser, more realistic ones. In any event, the national policy on preparations for an invasion has been promulgated, it is being implemented today, and it requires only persistence and time to achieve a semblance of viability. Whatever degree of inefficiency plagues the implementation of these plans today, Giap and other military leaders can draw some comfort from the knowledge that if an invasion does occur, a basic framework for the defense of the country has been established, and the population and army of the North cannot be caught totally unprepared." *(Patrick J. McGarvey, Visions of Victory (Stanford: Stanford University, 1969), pp. 33-39.)*

3 January-- In an interview with Harrison E. Salisbury of the New York Times, DRV Premier Pham Van Dong suggests that his Government's 4-point plan is a matter for "discussion". This would seem to indicate an easing of Hanoi's heretofore uncompromising stand on this issue. *(Donald S. Zagoria, Vietnam Triangle (New York: Pegasus, 1967), p. 157.)*

3 January-- UN Secretary-General U Thant is reported by the New York Times to be convinced that a halt in the bombing of North Vietnam will lead to negotiations to end the conflict in the South. He believes that the DRV will deescalate their military operations if US air strikes are unconditionally stopped.

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(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 214.)

5-6 January-- A high-ranking DRV diplomat in Paris tells a group of French journalists that if the United States will "definitely and unconditionally" stop the bombing of North Vietnam, his Government would be willing to "examine and study" American peace proposals. On 6 January, however, the DRV issues a statement making it clear that it still insists on the acceptance of its four-point plan. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), pp. 214-15.)*

12 January-- American newsmen Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs interview Ho Chi Minh on this date. They later reveal that the two main points that he made were:

"...that there could be no productive talk about a settlement in Vietnam until the United States halted the bombing, and that if this condition were met there was no other barrier to negotiations that might lead to peace.

'Your government must understand this,' he said. 'We are not at war with the United States, we have committed no hostile act against your territory. We are supporting our fellow Vietnamese in the South in their war of liberation, but this is a matter among Vietnamese, not an attack against the United States. Yet your bombers are attacking our territory every day, your naval vessels are committing hostile acts within our territorial waters, your artillery is firing across the demilitarized zone. No self-respecting independent nation can tolerate this. While these acts of war go on you cannot expect us to come to the negotiating table. To do so would be not to negotiate a settlement, but to sue for peace—to surrender. This we shall never do.

When you ask what would we do in return if you stop the bombing it is like being asked by a Chicago gangster who has held you up at gun-point what you are willing to pay him not to shoot you. The answer is that when the bombing stops the talks can begin. If the United States wants to begin talks with the DRV your government knows what to do—stop the bombing.'

If he was unyielding on the bombing, however, Ho was quite evidently using his conversation with us to convey to Washington his willingness to make other major concessions. At that time Hanoi still stood officially on the four points...As the talk went on, Ho made it clear by indirection that all of these four points had been dropped as conditions for opening talks, or considerably modified—which meant that while they would certainly

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turn up as items on the agenda, Ho was conceding in advance that they were negotiable.

Although he refused to consider any prior guarantee of reciprocal military action, he made a point that could be taken as opening the way for the kind of mutual deescalation Washington was then demanding as the price of a bombing pause. The United States, Ho said, made a great deal of the fact that North Vietnam continued to supply the NLF during previous suspensions of the aerial attack —charging that this enabled its enemies to strengthen their position in the South and imperiled the American forces there. Well, he said, so did the United States continue to send in men, weapons, and supplies during these bombing pauses, and he went on to charge that the original purpose of the bombing was to provide a shield behind which American troops could be moved in to take over the fighting from the collapsing South Vietnamese armies. 'If the United States wants to talk about a halt to the build-up of the fighting forces in the South let it first stop building up its own side,' he said. 'If that were done and the bombing stopped there would be much to talk about.'

On the matter of troop withdrawal he said, 'I realize that President Johnson has pledged that the United States has no ambition to maintain a permanent military force in Vietnam. Frankly we find this hard to believe when we see the huge permanent military installations you are building in the South, and we also understand from experience that the conditions about free elections are the kind that have been used before to justify continued intervention. However, on our side, we realize that it is not possible to simply stop fighting and remove such a huge military force overnight. We would expect that it would take some time for the Americans to depart after an armistice is arranged.'

Did that mean he would consider a phased withdrawal, along the lines Mr. Johnson had suggested? You could call it that, he replied—the terminology was not important, only the fact that as an *ultimate* objective the Vietnamese people had to be guaranteed the right to run their own affairs without outside interference.

The National Liberation Front was made conspicuous by the absence of specific mention in Ho's discourse. The only direct reference came in passing praise of the gallant fighting men at the front, where Ho still did not concede that DRV regulars were engaged. We circled warily around the matter of whether the DRV continued to insist, as it once had, that the NLF must be represented at any talks with the United States, and suggested that we had reason to believe our government might be willing to yield on this point.

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Ho replied, 'There are no other conditions for initiating talks once the bombing is stopped.' Here he brought up the matter of 'face,' conceding that he understood that the Johnson administration had some troublesome commitments to the South Vietnamese regime and to its other Asian allies—and strongly implying that he had similar 'face' problems of his own. The implication here was that Ho recognized that if he insisted on NLF representation he would have to accept Saigon—a point that would later take on much significance as the maneuvering began on the Paris talks. Vietnam's other active allies, China and the Soviet Union, came into the conversation only in passing, as 'our Socialist brothers.'

On the matter of reunification Ho was more precise. Vietnam, he insisted, was one country, and ultimately it must be united under one government—that one, we gathered, clearly being his own. But there was no reason the South could not be governed separately for a while, provided the government were truly representative, as the present 'puppet regime' in Saigon certainly was not. Such a government, he continued, would have no difficulty collaborating with the DRV, and he had no doubt that in time the two regimes would work out a true and lasting union. This, of course, constituted tacit acceptance of a coalition government in the South.

We asked if he could give us an idea what 'in time' meant in this context. He replied, 'It could be ten years, or longer. That is not important, so long as the Vietnamese people are free to work out their own destiny. They will see to it that Vietnam is again one country. I may not live to see it, but I have no doubt that this will come. All our history demands it.'"

Commenting on their trip to Hanoi, Ashmore and Baggs conclude: "We had brought back nothing that could be described as a hard proposition from Hanoi, but in context it appeared that Ho had met all the stated American conditions for opening negotiations except a guarantee to close the border between North and South Vietnam in return for a cessation of the bombing. Privately, most Washington insiders conceded that the so-called 'infiltration' guarantee was an unrealistic demand under the circumstances. The North Vietnamese could hardly agree to halt the maintenance and supply of fighting forces dependent upon them unless they were prepared to leave them wholly at the mercy of the massive American expeditionary force roaring through the countryside on its 'search and destroy' mission. The most that could reasonably be expected was a much more modest reciprocal gesture as a manifest of good faith, and we could report that Ho Chi Minh

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appeared to us to be inviting such a proposal. In any case, the way was wide open for a further probe—either through us, or directly through diplomatic channels—without any risk of compromising the official U.S. position." *(Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs, Mission to Hanoi (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1967), pp. 46-50, 57-58.)*

14 January-- Even the development of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution did not substantially alter Peking's stand on direct involvement in the Vietnam conflict. On this date, Yeh Chien-ying, a member of the Party Politburo and Vice-chairman of the National Defense Council, addresses a mass rally in Peking. He declares: "The Chinese people have no hesitation in making the greatest national sacrifices to support the Vietnamese people to the end of their resistance to U.S. aggression. The Chinese People's Liberation Army has made every preparation. We will go to the forefront to aid Vietnam and resist U.S. aggression, fight shoulder to shoulder with the Vietnamese people, and completely wipe out the U.S. aggressors as soon as the situation requires, the Vietnamese people require, and Chairman Mao, our great supreme commander, gives the order." Of some interest is the fact that, apparently for the first time, the needs of the "Vietnamese people", although still a condition for China's involvement, are placed second to the requirements of "the situation", obviously a matter for Peking to assess. Yeh's reference to the PLA also represents a departure from the practice during preceding months of mentioning only "Chinese" preparedness. *(New China (Hsinhua) news agency international service broadcast, 15 January 1967.)*

23 January-- In his testimony before Senate Committees in support of the request for supplemental defense appropriations and authorizations for Fiscal Year 1967, Secretary McNamara and General Wheeler discuss the war in Southeast Asia. In his prepared statement, Secretary McNamara summarizes the results of air operations: "By and large, our air operations have produced the results that we expected from them. The close air support requirements of the land forces have been met in full. The interdiction operations have increased substantially the costs of infiltrating men and materiel from North Vietnam to South Vietnam. For those who thought that air attacks on North Vietnam would end the aggression in South Vietnam, the results from this phase of the operation have been disappointing. But for those who understood the political and economic structure of North Vietnam, the results have been satisfactory. Most of the war materiel sent from North Vietnam to South Vietnam is provided by other Communist countries and no amount of destruction of the industrial capacity of North Vietnam can, by itself, eliminate this flow. Our air attacks on North Vietnam petroleum resources have destroyed two-thirds of its storage capacity but, as I pointed out...last year, the North Vietnamese could not

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have brought in petroleum 'over the beach' and have stored it at widely dispersed locations. Although we have taken a toll of this flow of supply, shortages of petroleum products do not appear as yet to have greatly impeded the North Vietnamese war effort...When the bombing campaign started, we did not believe that air attacks on North Vietnam, by themselves, would bring its leaders to the conference table, or break the morale of its people—and they have not done so. We have stated before and I wish to repeat today that the bombing of the North is intended as a supplement to and not a substitute for the military operations in the South." He says that no new ways have been found to interdict North Vietnamese support for South Vietnamese Communists but that: "There are some possible technological developments that would assist us in obtaining greater control over the infiltration." He observes that quite a substantial amount of material is moving over the Hanoi-China railroad, but that there are four problems involved in its interdiction: (1) It is heavily protected in places, and the cost of attacking it is great. (2) The weather is extremely unpredictable and generally bad. (3) Bombing techniques required to destroy a railroad are not far advanced. (4) The North Vietnamese have devoted an immense amount of materiel and human resources to repairing it after air attacks. Based upon "the best analysis available within the Government," Secretary McNamara says that the bombings of the North have diverted major resources to repair the lines of communications, have had some adverse effect on public morale, and have undoubtedly limited the ability of the DRV to infiltrate men and equipment into the South. He also says that the North Vietnamese have been able to move substantial amounts of petroleum over their beaches because they "are very skillful in hiding and camouflaging the barges that they use for the offloading." General Wheeler enters the discussion at this point, adding: "We destroyed essentially the unloading facility at Haiphong...We have kept a close watch on this, and to the best of our knowledge, they are not bringing the tankers in, tying them up alongside a 'T'-head pier, and then pumping into fixed capacity. Instead...they are bringing their POL in by three means; first, they are moving small tankers usually, but occasionally a 10,000-ton job into the stream, well away from the city of Haiphong, unloading it at night into barges, which they...[direct] into the many estuaries in the Haiphong delta. Secondly, they are bringing in small quantity of already drummed POL, 55-gallon drums. These are usually deckloads on Soviet freighters or East European freighters. A small quantity undoubtedly comes down the northeast arm of the railroad from China, but I would say that this is only a small percentage of what comes in. The bulk of it is off-loaded into barges or comes in by drum." Later in his testimony, Secretary McNamara cites the POL experience to support his belief that denying the enemy

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the Haiphong Harbor would not have much impact on the transmission of supplies into South Vietnam. He states: "We, in effect, took out the Haiphong docks for unloading of POL, and we have had very little effect on the importation level at the present time. I would think it is about as high today as it would have been if we had never struck the Haiphong docks, and I think the same thing would be true if we took out the cargo docks in Haiphong, for dry cargo." He further defends his prepared statement that the air attacks against the DRV are a penalty and not a restriction on hostile activities: "I believe it is a penalty and not a restriction in the sense that I don't believe that the bombing up to the present has significantly reduced, nor any bombing that I could contemplate in the future would significantly reduce, the actual flow of men and materiel into the South." General Wheeler, however, disagrees: "...I believe that our bombing in the North has reduced the flow. I do not discount the effect to the extent that some other people do." He argues that the North Vietnamese have put just about as many regular troops into the South as they can supply. But Secretary McNamara falls back on his original statement that despite "unrestricted bombing of POL" air attacks have not been able to "dry up the POL." Still, he suggests that the bombing has been successful since it has increased morale in South Vietnam, upped the cost of North Vietnamese infiltration, raised the political price paid by the North in continuing their campaign in the South. He thinks that the DRV propaganda offensive which seeks to end the bombing reflects its success. He goes on to state that the populated areas of Hanoi have never been targeted as such, although strikes have been authorized against SAM sites that were believed to be active within the Hanoi area. Strikes against other military targets, such as the petroleum storage depot near Hanoi, have also been authorized. He thinks that if the DRV were to withdraw its support for the struggle in the South, that conflict would end. "I would imagine that if North Vietnam withdrew its support, either because it was physically forced to withdraw, or because it made a political decision to withdraw, the effect on morale would be so great as to cause the forces of the NLF and North Vietnamese in the south to collapse very quickly. But it would not collapse because of lack of materiel in the short run. It would collapse because of lack of opportunity for victory in the longer run." On the subject of hostile air activity, he says: "I do not anticipate any substantial increase in their activity. This does not mean that I do not believe that they will occasionally attack our planes. I think they will. They have at various times in the past. They go through a cycle of activity. They attack us. We respond with action that causes them to lose several times as many aircraft as we lose. They retire and go

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through more training. They change their aircraft or build up their courage again. They come back and attack us again and we go through exactly that cycle all over again. We have done that I think three or four times and I am sure we will in the future. Each time they become a little more proficient, but the slight additional proficiency does not bring them anywhere close to our effectiveness, so I do not anticipate any significant air war there, in terms that we would consider significant in the future." Secretary McNamara also says that the SAM's are ineffective. When asked about a report that the Chinese Communists may be stealing SAM's that are being shipped through China, he quips: "They are not worth stealing in my opinion." He knows that the missiles are forcing American planes to come in lower, but he observes "...the missiles have been quite unsuccessful in destroying our aircraft." He also does not believe that much antiaircraft ammunition comes through Hanoi: "If it comes over land by rail, as I presume it does, and as most of it is large military equipment—you referred to surface-to-air missiles, for example—the rail line northeast of Hanoi is quite capable of carrying that tonnage." Asked about restrictions against destroying SAM's, which have been reported by pilots, he responds: "...when you strike them, it is costly, and that is a good reason not to strike them if you can avoid it. But there is no gain from striking them while they are under construction and before the equipment has been moved in. It is quite apparent that the North Vietnamese constructed far more sites than they had equipment for, and their pattern of action was to scar the earth, which is why we knew a site was being constructed, but not install at that site the radar and battery equipment. Certainly there is no sense in dropping bombs on scarred earth without equipment on it...And when... reconnaissance shows it, it is the only time when a strike is warranted, and therefore prior to that time, they should not be struck. After that time, my guess is most commanders would not strike them unless they were interfering with operations, because they were heavily defended, and to strike them causes losses." McNamara also insists: "I think at no time did Washington exercise control over SAM site strikes in Fiscal Year 1966." In another answer, the Secretary again expresses doubts that the SAM's and antiaircraft artillery weapons come into the DRV by ship. He says: "They come overland by rail through China." This leads him to minimize the importance of mining the Haiphong harbor. He argues: "First, we doubt that we could close or prevent them from receiving goods by sea, under the present circumstances...Second, we believe that an attempt to prohibit importation by sea, for example, by mining the Haiphong port, could very possibly react to our disadvantage." Thus, the decision not to close the ports would be partly political and partly military: "The political reason...would assume less weight and importance if

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there was a great military gain to be achieved. But if the military gain is likely to be small, it is unwise to pay a political price as large as that which today appears to be associated with such an action." *(90th Cong 1st Sess, Supplemental Defense Appropriations and Authorizations, Fiscal Year 1967, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Department of Defense of the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate (Washington: GPO, 1967), pp. 13, 20, 36, 48-49, 57-58, 62, 69-71, 76, 79-80, 84-85, 94-95.)*

24 January-- In a second day of testimony before Senate Committees in support of the supplemental appropriations and authorizations for defense in FY 1967, Secretary McNamara elaborates on his arguments about the economic insignificance of the DRV as a support base for the war in the South. He states that North Vietnam is almost entirely an agricultural country. At least 85 percent of its economic activities are associated with agriculture. The conflict in South Vietnam is being supported by external sources, particularly China and the Soviet Union. This means that American efforts "are directed to the destruction of the support that basically flows from China and the Soviet Union into South Vietnam through North Vietnam, by attacking that support in South Vietnam and interdicting it, to the extent feasible, in North Vietnam. In particular, it is an effort to influence the political decision of the political leaders of North Vietnam to cease their support by imposing this pressure on them in the north, while at the same time proving to them that they have no opportunity to win in the south." He goes on to say: "We doubt very much that a change in targets attacked within the north would significantly affect the flow of materiel, men, and supplies to the south." *(90th Cong 1st Sess, Supplemental Defense Appropriations and Authorizations, Fiscal Year 1967, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Department of Defense of the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate (Washington: GPO, 1967), pp. 118-19.)*

27 January-- US Secretary of State Dean Rusk approves the following elaboration of the 14 points for peace in Southeast Asia which had been made public previously on 7 January 1966 (see 27 December 1965 entry):

"1. The Geneva Agreements of 1954 and 1962 are an adequate basis for peace in Southeast Asia.

2. We would welcome a conference on Southeast Asia or any part thereof: —We are ready to negotiate a settlement based on a strict observance of the 1954 and 1962 Geneva Agreements, which

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observance was called for in the declaration on Viet-Nam of the meeting of the Warsaw Pact countries in Bucharest on July 6, 1966. And we will support a reconvening of the Geneva Conference, or an Asian conference, or any other generally acceptable forum.

3. We would welcome 'negotiations without preconditions' as called for by 17 non-alined nations in an appeal delivered to Secretary Rusk on April 1, 1965.

4. We would welcome 'unconditional discussions' as called for by President Johnson on April 7, 1965: --If the other side will not come to a conference, we are prepared to engage in direct discussions or discussions through an intermediary.

5. A cessation of hostilities could be the first order of business at a conference or could be the subject of preliminary discussions: --We have attempted, many times, to engage the other side in a discussion of a mutual deescalation of the level of violence, and we remain prepared to engage in such a mutual deescalation. --We stand ready to cooperate fully in getting discussions which could lead to a cessation of hostilities started promptly and brought to a successful completion.

6. Hanoi's four points could be discussed along with other points which others may wish to propose: --We would be prepared to accept preliminary discussions to reach agreement on a set of points as a basis for negotiations.

7. We want no U.S. bases in Southeast Asia: --We are prepared to assist in the conversation of these bases for peaceful uses that will benefit the peoples of the entire area.

8. We do not desire to retain U.S. troops in South Viet-Nam after peace is assured: --We seek no permanent military bases, no permanent establishment of troops, no permanent alliances, no permanent American 'presence' of any kind in South Viet-Nam. --We have pledged in the Manila Communique that 'Allied forces are in the Republic of Vietnam because that country is the object of aggression and its government requested support in the resistance of its people to aggression. They shall be withdrawn, after close consultation, as the other side withdraws its forces to the North, ceases infiltration, and the level of violence thus subsides. Those forces will be withdrawn as soon as possible and not later than six months after the above conditions have been fulfilled.'

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9. We support free elections in South Viet-Nam to give the South Vietnamese a government of their own choice: --We support the development of broadly based democratic institutions in South Viet-Nam. --We do not seek to exclude any segment of the South Vietnamese people from peaceful participation in their country's future.

10. The question of the reunification of Viet-Nam should be determined by the Vietnamese through their own free decision: --It should not be decided by the use of force. --We are fully prepared to support the decision of the Vietnamese people.

11. The countries of Southeast Asia can be nonalined or neutral if that be their option: --We do not seek to impose a policy of alinement on South Viet-Nam. --We support the neutrality policy of the Royal Government of Laos, and we support the neutrality and territorial integrity of Cambodia.

12. We would much prefer to use our resources for the economic reconstruction of Southeast Asia than in war. If there is peace, North Viet-Nam could participate in a regional effort to which we would be prepared to contribute at least one billion dollars: --We support the growing efforts by the nations of the area to cooperate in the achievement of their economic and social goals.

13. The President has said 'The Viet Cong would have no difficulty in being represented and having their views presented if Hanoi for a moment decides she wants to cease aggression. And I would not think that would be an insurmountable problem at all.'

14. We have said publicly and privately that we could stop the bombing of North Viet-Nam as a step toward peace although there has not been the slightest hint or suggestion from the other side as to what they would do if the bombing stopped: --We are prepared to order a cessation of all bombing of North Viet-Nam the moment we are assured--privately or otherwise--that this step will be answered promptly by a corresponding and appropriate deescalation of the other side. --We do not seek the unconditional surrender of North Viet-Nam; what we do seek is to assure for the people of South Viet-Nam the right to decide their own political destiny, free of force." *(Department of State Bulletin, vol 56, pp. 284-85.)*

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27 January-- In a hearing before the Senate Subcommittee on Appropriations, Robert McNamara is asked about a newspaper article dated 22 January 1967 written by Edgar A. Mowrer which claims that the United States has a promise from Communist China not to intervene in Vietnam as long as the US refrains from attacking China, blockading Haiphong, and not invading North Vietnam. The Secretary of Defense responds: "There is no agreement, formal or informal, with Red China relating to the war in South Vietnam in any form whatsoever that I know of." McNamara adds that the US will continue to attack military targets in North Vietnam, but that these targets "are so dispersed that that is one of the real problems we have in trying to achieve a high level of damage and a substantial effect on their infiltration to the south." *(90th Cong 1st Sess, Department of Defense Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1968, Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, U.S. Senate (Washington: GPO, 1967), pt 1, pp. 417-18.)*

28 January-- DRV Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh is interviewed by Australian journalist Wilfred Burchett. He states: "If it [the United States] really wants talks, it must first halt unconditionally the bombing raids and all other acts of war against the DRV. It is only after the unconditional cessation of U.S. bombing and all other acts of war against the DRV that there could be talks between the DRV and the United States." Subsequently, Washington newsmen are told unofficially that North Vietnam, through diplomatic intermediaries, has directed the attention of the US Government to this interview in which Hanoi's 4 points and the NLF's 5 conditions are also reiterated. The US State Department says that it has not decided whether Trinh's statement indicated any change in Hanoi's position. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 220.)*

30 January-- A Liberation Press Agency interview with NLF leader Huynh Tan Phat produces only a reiteration of previous Front demands: "In South Viet-Nam, we are resolved to demand that the United States put an end to its war of aggression, withdraw its troops, weapons, and satellites forces, dismantle its military bases, respect the sacred national rights of the South Vietnamese people, namely independence, democracy, neutrality, territorial integrity, and self-determination, and recognize the Front as the sole, legitimate representative of the South Vietnamese people...

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The fight of the Vietnamese people, whether in the North or in the South, is a legitimate war for self-defence and is compatible with international laws. The four-point stand of the DRV and the position of the Front enunciated in its five-point statement of 22 March 1965 express the aspirations and fundamental rights of the people in the entire country. They are the sole, correct basis for the solution of the Viet-Nam problem in general and of South Viet-Nam in particular." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 11 (Canberra: GPO, 1967), pp. 26-27.)*

4 February-- Presidential Assistant Walt W. Rostow tells a group of college editors meeting in Washington that the United States and North Vietnam are engaged in "a negotiating process." He adds that "nothing has yet happened that would justify us as saying we have a serious offer to negotiate." This same day, the Soviet news agency Tass criticizes President Johnson for rejecting the peace feeler put out by DRV Foreign Minister Trinh. *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 220.)*

8 February-- Soviet Premier Kosygin arrives in London to confer with Prime Minister Harold Wilson. He pointedly notes with approval Trinh's offer to negotiate in return for an unconditional halt to the bombing. Donald S. Zagoria, in his book Vietnam Triangle, states that there is reason to believe that Moscow in this period is transmitting messages to Hanoi containing American terms for negotiations, a practice which the USSR had not engaged in previously. *(Donald S. Zagoria, Vietnam Triangle (New York: Pegasus, 1967), p. 158.)*

8 February-- President Johnson writes a letter to Ho Chi Minh which is delivered to the North Vietnamese in Moscow on this date. President Johnson states that the US has attempted over the past several years to convey to Ho "our desire to achieve a peaceful settlement." He suggests "direct talks between trusted representatives in a secure setting and away from the glare of publicity." He is unwilling to cease bombing "unconditionally" as a prelude to negotiations because this would focus the spotlight of publicity on the talks that were about to begin and because "there would inevitably be grave concern on our part whether your government would make use of such action by

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us to improve its military position." He suggests that private meetings could begin at the end of the New Year, or Tet, holidays. He ends by remarking: "The important thing is to end a conflict that has brought burdens to both our peoples, and above all to the people of South Viet-Nam." *(Department of State Bulletin, vol 56, pp. 595-96.)*

9 February-- At his news conference, Secretary of State Rusk notes that the Communists are making a "systematic campaign...to bring about an unconditional and permanent cessation of the bombing of North Viet-Nam, without any corresponding military action on their side, in exchange for the possibility of talks--talks which are thus far formless and without content." He states that the Communists must not expect the US to stop its military bombing when they continue their military action by invasion. He reiterates that the American objective is a limited one--a South Viet-Nam capable of determining its own future without outside interference. *(Department of State Bulletin, vol 56, pp. 317-22.)*

10 February-- The US State Department expresses its concern over increased shipments of supplies from North Vietnam to the South during the Tet cease-fire. Military officials report that during that four-day period, the DRV has shipped "more than during the entire month of January." A State Department spokesman says this buildup makes him question the sincerity of "the enemy's interest in a peaceful settlement of the war." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 220.)*

10 February-- U Thant calls for a permanent halt to the bombing of North Vietnam. He believes that "an indefinite and unconditional extension of this cease-fire would help in moving this tragic conflict to the conference table." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967, p. 220.)*

10 February-- Premier Kosygin and Prime Minister Harold Wilson urge extension of the cease-fire for two days, indicating their hope that negotiations may result from such actions. *(Donald S. Zagoria, Vietnam Triangle (New York: Pegasus, 1967), p. 159.)*

13 February-- President Johnson announces the resumption of hostilities following the Tet cease-fire. He says that Hanoi

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has made no response to the American efforts toward peace during the truce and that in fairness to US and Allied troops there is no choice but to resume full-scale fighting. He adds: "But the door to peace is, and will remain, open, and we are prepared at any time to go more than half way to meet any equitable overture from the other side." *(Department of State Bulletin, vol 56, p. 365.)*

13 February-- Ho Chi Minh, in a reply to Pope Paul's peace appeal, urges the Pope to try to convince the United States "to respect the national rights of the Vietnamese people." This same day, in reaction to the resumption of bombing, the DRV Foreign Ministry declares: "The Vietnamese people will never accept this. The Americans can never cow the Vietnamese people." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 220a.)*

13 February-- Following a meeting between Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin and British P.M. Harold Wilson, a joint statement is issued noting that there had been "a prolonged exchange of views...concerning events in South-East Asia. Both Governments...agreed that these events were a danger to neighboring states and to the peace and stability of the region and that it was essential to achieve the earliest possible end of the Viet-Nam war. Both Governments confirmed their adherence to the principles of the Geneva Agreements of 1954 and 1962 which were signed by both the Soviet Union and Great Britain. They set forth their respective views on the ways to bring about peace in Viet-Nam. The two Governments will continue to make a close study of the situation and will make every possible effort with a view to achieving a settlement of the Viet-Nam problem and will maintain contact to this end..." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 11 (Canberra: GPO, 1967), p. 41.)*

14 February-- Frederick Taylor reports in the Wall Street Journal on the subject of Sino-Soviet aid to the DRV: "There's no question that the Soviet Union is the primary supplier of war goods to North Vietnam, even through rival China loudly disputes that fact. U.S. intelligence experts estimate that the Russians have supplied North Vietnam with more than $600 million in

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military aid, including $500 million in arms alone, since 1953; of that total, 85% has been sent since August 1964, when North Vietnamese ships attacked U.S. destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin and the Vietnam war began heating up rapidly. Since 1953 the Chinese have given Hanoi only $150 million in military aid, 65% of that since August 1964...The Soviet arms aid, according to U.S. estimates, has flowed like this: Before 1964, $50 million; in 1964, $25 million; in 1965, $200 million to $225 million; in 1966, about $200 million. Analysts figure Chinese military aid in 1965 was about $35 million and rose to $50 million or $60 million last year, most of it in small arms such as rifles and mortars that play a major role in the war in the south." *(Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs, Mission to Hanoi (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1967), p. 322.)*

15 February-- On this date, a letter from Ho Chi Minh to President Johnson is delivered in Moscow. It charges that the United States has constantly intervened in Vietnam and has launched and intensified its war of aggression in the South in order to prolong the division of the country and to transform the South into an American neo-colony and military base. It further charges that the US Government has committed war crimes and has resorted to most inhumane methods such as napalm, chemicals, and poison gases. In North Vietnam, American planes have destroyed cities, villages , mills, roads, bridges, dikes, dams, and even churches, pagodas, hospitals, and schools. Ho states that the US Government must cease aggression in Vietnam, specifically: "The United States Government must halt definitively and unconditionally the bombings and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam, withdraw from South Viet-Nam all American troops and all troops from the satellite countries, recognize the National Front of the Liberation of South Viet-Nam, and let the Vietnamese people settle their problems themselves." This is the basic content of the DRV four-point position of the previous year, and it is the basis for a correct political solution to the Vietnam problem. He adds: "If the United States Government really wants talks, it must first halt unconditionally the bombings and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam. It is only after the unconditional halting of the American bombings and of all other American acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam that the Democratic Republic of Vietnam

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and the United States could begin talks and discuss questions affecting the two parties." *(Department of State Bulletin, vol 56, pp. 596-97.)*

17 February-- Hanoi's Nhan Dan refers to British P.M. Harold Wilson's peace initiatives as "a clumsy attempt...to hoodwink public opinion..." *(Joint United States Public Affairs Office, Viet-Nam: Documents and Research Notes, no. 8 (Saigon: JUSPAO, 1967), p. 7.)*

20 February-- Peking waited almost one month after publication of Nguyen Duy Trinh's interview before replying to the DRV initiative. When it did issue a statement, its decisive refutation of the notion that only a bombing halt could gain negotiations for the Americans made very clear the Chinese hostility to North Vietnamese concessions. In a thinly veiled reply to the Trinh-Burchett interview, Jenmin Jih Pao's "Observer" asks: "Should the U.S. cessation of bombing of the north be the solution for the Vietnam question? Absolutely not. The Vietnam question involves the U.S. dispatch of hundreds of thousands of troops to South Vietnam to wage a barbaric colonial war and the spreading of the flames of war to all of Vietnam. Therefore, the remedy for the Vietnam question is for the U.S. aggressor force to get out of Vietnam, cease the aggression against all Vietnam, and let the Vietnamese people solve their own problems. It is not a question of whether the United States bombs the north or not." DRV concern over the permanency of any US bombing halt was a moot point for the Chinese. To them, the occupation of South Vietnam made the Americans "still the aggressor whether they resume bombings, cease bombing, or 'permanently' stop bombing." What Peking was demanding, therefore, was nothing less than that Hanoi return to its four points, insist with intransigence on their acceptance, and stop bantering with the imperialist aggressors over their blackmail "bombing cessation" plan. *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 11 (Canberra: GPO, 1967), pp. 43-46.)*

24-26 February-- On 24 February, US artillery attacks ground targets in North Vietnam for what is said to be the first time. Two days later, the United States mines rivers in North Vietnam. Hanoi denounces these actions as "a new escalation of the war." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 220a.)*

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March-- The Soviet-oriented international journal World Marxist Review publishes a review of the conflict in Vietnam covering the previous year. It refers to a 20 December 1966 communique from the NLF which maintains that the "U.S. Expeditionary Corps" is the primary force in all military operations, including pacification in strategically important areas: "The South Vietnam puppet army plays but an auxiliary role...Thus, the armed forces of the NLF are pitted against a strong, experienced and cruel enemy. But the South Vietnamese patriots have the indisputable advantage over the enemy as regards experience in jungle warfare, knowledge of the terrain, and the ability to attack swiftly and suddenly. There is also the moral factor which is of great importance: the Liberation Army knows what it is fighting for and can rely on the support of the entire nation...The Liberation Army and guerrilla detachments kept the enemy in a constant state of tension. By employing different forms of action—short, lightning attacks, pitched battles, raids behind enemy lines—they further aggravated the contradictions the U.S. command is constantly confronted with, namely, its desire to concentrate its troops, to operate in massed groups, thus making the most effective use of weapons and equipment, and the necessity to keep shifting and breaking up its forces." With regard to the US peace feelers, the Review remarks: "The end of 1966 and beginning of 1967 were again marked by hypocritical 'peace initiatives' by Washington, only to be negated by the ruthless bombing of densely populated districts of Hanoi, and the dispatch of new U.S. troops to South Vietnam. In an interview granted to the Australian journalist Wilfred Burchet, Nguyen Duy Trinh, the Foreign Minister of the DRV, declared in connection with the American 'peace initiatives' that if the USA really wants to negotiate it must first of all unconditionally stop the bombing raids and all other aggressive acts against the Democratic Republic; only after this can negotiations take place between the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the United States." *(Jan Prazsky, "A Year of Struggles and of Victories", World Marxist Review, X, no. 3 (March 1967), pp. 87, 89.)*

1 March-- DRV Premier Pham Van Dong tells a French correspondent in a written interview that "he did not think there was any present possibility of talks between the United States and North Viet Nam for a peaceful solution of the war." Hanoi rejects peace talks at this time "because the United States aggressors are continuing their escalations, thus defying public opinion and the universal conscience of the peoples." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 220b.)*

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3 March-- In testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, Secretary McNamara states that one of the purposes of the bombing campaign against North Vietnam is "to reduce the level of infiltration from north to south, and/or increase the cost of that infiltration...And the reason I expressed it that way is, frankly, I wasn't sure when we initiated the bombings, and I am not sure today, that we can ever reduce the flow below some minimum level. We are talking about very, very small movements--although they are absolutely essential from the point of view of the insurgency against the south. The infiltration involves only very, very small movements of men and materiel. If we accept even Saigon's estimate of infiltrees, on the order of 6,000 to 8,000 a month, that is only some 200 a day. Now, imagine trying to stop the movement of 200 men a day by aircraft. I do not think any of us can say we could do it or could have done it. Similarly, if we accept the tonnage requirement to be moved as something on the order of, well, say 100 tons or 150 tons or 200 tons, or even slightly more than that--it is very difficult to say because it is a very small tonnage--I am not prepared to say they couldn't move it on men's backs if they wanted to put enough men into the operation. Certainly, I am not prepared to say how much more they could have moved had we not bombed, but I can absolutely guarantee you that they are paying a very heavy price from our bombing for attempting to carry on that activity in the South." *(90th Cong 1st Sess, Hearings on Military Posture...before the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives (Washington: GPO, 1967), pp. 461-62.)*

10 March-- Nikolai Podgorny, Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, declares in a speech that "[i]n spite of the voluble incantations against the imperialism which the Chinese leadership make and their calls for struggle against it, in practice they disrupt combined efforts in the area of the sharpest anti-imperialist struggle, i.e. in Viet-Nam where American aggression is being repelled...In an announcement by the Chinese leadership regarding the Viet-Nam question, which was published a few days ago, there is not to be found a single word in support of the well-known proposal made by the Government of the DRV made in an interview at its Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This silence is not fortuitous. It means that the Mao group are against this proposal, that its ideas on the war in Viet-Nam do not accord with those of the Government of the DRV..." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 11 (Canberra: GPO, 1967), p. 66.)*

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14 March-- In an aide memoire to the parties concerned in the war in Vietnam, Secretary-General U Thant reasserts his belief that an end to the bombing of North Vietnam continues to be a crucial move which could lead to meaningful talks to terminate the conflict. He now envisages three steps: "(a) A general stand-still truce. (b) Preliminary talks. (c) Reconvening of the Geneva Conference." He proposes that representatives of the Saigon Government and the National Liberation Front be included in the formal conference that would discuss the termination of all military activities and the new political situation. *(Department of State Bulletin, vol 56, pp. 624-25.)*

18 March-- British Historian Arnold Toynbee reveals in an interview with the New York Times that he is "very pessimistic about the resolution of the Viet Nam conflict." He says that "being bombed only makes the North Vietnamese more dogged and more determined. Look at my country, Britain [during World War II]." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 220c.)*

18 March-- A US aide memoire is issued which accepts U Thant's three-step negotiating proposal. The United States believes it would contribute to serious negotiations if an effective cease-fire could be promptly negotiated. *(Department of State Bulletin, vol 56, p. 626.)*

21 March-- In a statement at Andrews Air Force Base upon returning from meetings with South Vietnamese officials at Guam, President Johnson reports that those discussions dealt with the military progress of the war, the political progress in South Vietnam, the morale, health, training, etc. of US troops, the national reconciliation and land reform programs, the extent of civilian casualties, and the possibilities of bringing the war to an end through an honorable settlement. He states that no specific new programs were adopted at the conference. *(Department of State Bulletin, vol 56, p. 594.)*

22 March-- Pravda describes the meeting at Guam between President Johnson and South Vietnamese officials as a "new stage in the escalation of American aggression...At the closed meetings the Washington leaders and generals approved plans for the further expansion of the United States criminal war in South-East Asia...According to Associated Press, discussed and 'favourably resolved' in Guam was the question of the broader use of strategic B-52 bombers which would now make raids also from bases in Thailand...To the proposal of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam which declared that if the United States unconditionally stopped bombings and other military actions against the DRV it would be possible to conduct talks, the United States Government replied by expanding aggression:

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shelling the small country from land and sea, mining the rivers, and increasing the bombing raids. The meeting which just ended in Guam Island also serves the aim of intensifying the criminal war...By rejecting the road of peaceful talks Washington is putting its stakes on the 'military solution' of the Vietnamese problem...The Vietnamese people reply to the expansion of United States military actions by increasing their determination to defend their freedom and independence." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 11 (Canberra: GPO, 1967), pp. 74-75.)*

27 March-- Peking's People's Daily comments on the Guam conference:

"Despite official US silence as to what specifically happened at the conference, the military arrangements made there are, according to Western news agency reports, mainly as follows:

The United States will send 'additional ground troops' to South Viet-Nam and 'has drawn up a chain of new future operations which will send US troops striking into Viet Cong areas on an unprecedented scale'. The United States will add new 'targets' to its 'strike list' for attack against North Viet-Nam, and will considerably step up such bombardments. The United States will move the B-52 strategic bombers stationed in the West Pacific to its base in Thailand for bombing both South and North Viet-Nam. The United States will intensify its 'military effort' in the whole of Viet-Nam and, moreover, will spread the flames of war to Laos and Cambodia.

It is particularly worth noting that USIS disclosed on March 21 that the Johnson Administration was planning 'to set up a defensive barrier north of the 17th Parallel' in order to bring about 'a major intensification' of the war in Viet-Nam and that this 'would require, of course, an invasion of North Viet-Nam'.

...While redoubling his efforts to extend the war, Johnson brays about 'seeking' a so-called 'honourable peace' in Viet-Nam. What does he mean by 'honourable peace'? To put it bluntly, it means that he wants the Vietnamese people to... surrender under the military pressure of the US aggressors.

...It is the encouragement and collaboration on the part of the Soviet revisionist ruling clique which have so swollen the insolence of US imperialism...this clique has brought pressure on the Vietnamese people and tried to wreck their struggle to resist US aggression and save the country. Nor is this all. It has spread wild stories about China on a massive scale, in an attempt to undermine the great militant friendship between

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the Chinese and Vietnamese people. What particularly deserves attention is the visit to London by Kosygin, the chieftain of Soviet revisionism, shortly before the Guam conference. There, Kosygin undertook the dirty mission of openly betraying the Vietnamese people's revolutionary cause. This greatly whetted the US imperialists' appetite for aggression...The Soviet revisionists are now working intensely behind the scenes with UN Secretary-General U Thant to throw up a smokescreen for the US plan to widen the war...This is another proof that the Soviet revisionist ruling clique is the leading accomplice of US imperialism in its aggression in Viet-Nam and Asia.

...Socialist China is the most powerful and most reliable rear base for the Vietnamese people's war for national salvation against US imperialism. The great proletarian cultural revolution now in full swing in China has made China still more stable and secure and powerful, thus providing still greater strength to support the just struggle of the fraternal Vietnamese people. The...Chinese people...are always ready to make the maximum national sacrifices and still greater contributions to the support of the fraternal Vietnamese people's struggle against US aggression..." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 11 (Canberra: GPO, 1967), pp. 76-77.)*

27 March-- Radio Hanoi broadcasts in English a response of the DRV Foreign Ministry to U Thant's aide memoire of 14 March. This statement says that the US is committing aggression against the Vietnamese people. The correct way to settle the Vietnam problem is for the United States to stop its aggression. This is the basic spirit of the four-point stand of the DRV and the five-point stand of the NFLSV. It concludes: "To call on both sides to cease fire and hold unconditional negotiations while the United States is committing aggression against Vietnam and taking serious steps in its military escalation in both zones of Vietnam is to make no distinction between the aggressor and the victim of the aggression, to depart from reality, and to demand that the Vietnamese people accept the conditions of the aggressors." Hanoi reemphasizes its stand that the Vietnam problem is no concern of the United Nations and that the UN has absolutely no right to interfere in any way in this issue. *(90th Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (Third Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate (Washington: GPO, 1967), pp. 307-08.)*

30 March-- The New China news agency comments on U Thant's aide memoire of 14 March. It states: "The memorandum in which U Thant put forward his 'three-step' proposals for the settlement of the Viet-Nam war was sent to the interested parties one week before the Guam Conference. And a week after that war

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conference, just as the United States was savagely escalating the war, the memorandum was released to the press. This proves that U Thant's new manoeuvre fully caters to the needs of US imperialism as it helps Washington's decision to bring the Vietnamese people to their knees by stepping up the war before and after the Guam Conference. U Thant's plan actually serves to camouflage the mad US escalation with a smokescreen for 'peace talks'...So long as South Viet-Nam is under the forcible occupation of US imperialism, all 'talks' and 'conferences', if held, will prove to be swindles serving the purpose of the US aggressor. It is common knowledge that the Viet-Nam question has no concern with the United Nations and that the United Nations has no right to intervene in Viet-Nam...U Thant's three-point proposals are entirely a product of the joint US-Soviet conspiracy to push the policy of bringing the Vietnamese people to their knees by means of pressure and coercion... The more rapidly US imperialism carries out the counter-revolutionary dual tactics, the nearer it is to a complete defeat. This is an objective law which no amount of help by the Soviet revisionists, UN Secretary-General U Thant, and their ilk can change..." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 11 (Canberra: GPO, 1967), pp. 82-83.)*

April-- DRV Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh, in an article in the Lao Dong theoretical journal Hoc Tap, discusses his Government's negotiating stand:

"Recently, faced with their increased isolation, the Americans stated that of the four points of the DRV government's stand, they can recognize only the first, second, and fourth points but not the third point. Thus, they have refused to recognize the NFLSV as the only genuine representative of the Southern people...

The fact that the Americans cannot recognize point three in our four-point stand means that they shirk the most important and most urgent political problem in Viet-Nam. Without recognizing point three, the recognition of the other points is merely formalistic and deceitful and, in essence, is aimed at rejecting all four points contained in our stand.

The Southern people demand that the Americans recognize the role of the South Viet-Nam National Liberation Front, that the affairs of the South be settled in accordance with the Front's political platform, that a national and democratic coalition administration be established in the South to achieve a comprehensively democratic and progressive regime and to carry out a peaceful and neutral foreign policy...

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To have peace, our people must carry out the revolution, achieve national liberation, and oust the U.S. Imperialists from South Viet-Nam. We have struggled not for peace in general, because, as Lenin said, peace in general has 'no content' and is 'meaningless'...

...In any case, peace negotiations must be based on principles and conditions. The basic and lasting interests of the people and the nation must be adopted as a basis, and the masses' fighting strength must be adopted as a bulwark.

The U.S. Imperialists have demanded that we 'negotiate unconditionally.' The other reactionary cliques have also echoed this demand and called for 'negotiations without preconditions.' This means that they demand that we accept peace at any price and surrender to the enemy in principle...

If the Americans really want peace in Viet-Nam, the U.S. Administration must recognize our four-point stand and prove this through actual deeds. Only then is it possible to consider a political solution for the Vietnamese problem." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 11 (Canberra: GPO, 1967), pp. 9-10.)*

April-- General Van Tien Dung, who is Chief of the General Staff of the [North] Vietnam People's Army, discusses, in a booklet published in Hanoi, the strengths and weaknesses of the US "expeditionary force" in South Vietnam. He notes:

"Obviously, the U.S. imperialists' strength is of a material and technical nature...But in our country, the strength of the United States has a limit...Moreover, the enemy's weak points are fundamental, on both the political and the military planes...This is particularly true of the U.S. conduct of the war:

1. They have been conducting the war in a passive way, without consistency in strategy. Defeated in their 'special warfare' strategy, they have had to switch to that of a 'limited war' and wage a war of destruction against North Vietnam, but the more they 'escalate', the heavier their setbacks become in both zones of Vietnam, and the more they increase their troops, the deeper they are bogged down. They want to fight rapidly to snatch a quick victory, but they are compelled to fight a protracted war.

Disunity has been widening in the ranks of the U.S. ruling circles, with some advocating withdrawal, others urging stronger actions, others again wavering, not willing to lose the war and fearing at the same time that it may broaden and drag on. Politically,

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the United States cannot fully use its military strength and, moreover, is sustaining more and more bitter defeats. This explains why it is faced with a graver political crisis and more serious political isolation.

2. Out of self-complacency the United States relies on its economic and military potential, and underestimates the moral and material strength of the Vietnamese people.

It hopes that by boosting its effectives and using more bombs and bullets it can intimidate our people in both the North and the South, and change the balance of forces in its favour, thus creating a basis for its counter-offensive strategy. But the balance of forces has changed contrarily to the U.S. wishful thinking. So, the more the Americans 'escalate' the war in North Vietnam, the deeper they are bogged down. On the South Vietnamese theatre their counter-offensive strategy, which did not take into account the practical relation of strength, has become an adventurous one, doomed to failure. After each setback they cannot find where their mistake lies, but obstinately ascribe it to the lack of troops, and military equipment, and then commit bigger mistakes and sustain still more bitter defeats.

3. The U.S. strategy is a passive one, vacillating between offensive and defensive, between increasing the mobility of troops and using them as an occupation force. It has to cope with people's war in South Vietnam on many theatres of operations... both at the front and in the rear. The immediate rear of the Americans, the staging base for their counter-offensive, is unstable and being narrowed down. In fact, there is no place in South Vietnam that they can regard as their sanctuary. Their logistic and operational bases, their airfields, are frequently hit though heavily guarded. Their communications and transport are under constant harassment...For their part, the puppet troops, who can assume neither combat nor defence tasks, are assigned the 'pacification' job, which can only accelerate their disintegration.

4. In operational conduct as well as in fighting the Americans proceed from the point of view that everything is decided by firepower. They repose no confidence in the effectiveness of their infantry, which, in fact, is too faint-hearted and too weak to engage the L.A.F., without firepower support, let alone annihilate them. They work out imposing plans but their possibilities to put them into effect are limited. Their fire-power is strong when it is used from long distances, but the support which it actually gives to the infantry is also limited. Though commanding a great operational mobility in tactical and combat jobs, the U.S. infantry usually huddles together in one

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place, not daring to fan out. As a result, this mobility only tires out their troops and makes their operations more costly. American planes, guns and tanks possess a big strike force, but they are greatly handicapped by the infantry (shock force) which is weak, and in some cases, even nil.

Clearly, the U.S. ground forces cannot destroy the L.A.F. because their infantry has a low morale, is weak and trained to fight on battlefields with clear-cut frontlines, and their other services are incapable of great effectiveness. When fielded, American troops can form encirclement prongs rather quickly; however, as their infantry lacks combativeness such a mobile deployment simply scatters their forces to be destroyed by chunks. In attacks, assaults and pursuits, they essentially count on the firepower of their air force and artillery, so that their 'search and destroy' efforts prove futile. Instead, they are often intercepted and suffer heavy losses in men and *materiel* at the hands of the Liberation forces who turn up unexpectedly." *(Van Tien Dung, South Vietnam: U.S. Defeat Inevitable (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1967), pp. 33-36.)*

April-- In this month the Lao Dong Central Committee meets and adopts Resolution 13, which states that the Communist forces should seek "a decisive victory in South Vietnam in the shortest possible time." Douglas Pike, in his study War, Peace, and the Viet Cong, discusses the tactics to be used, which "involve sudden and massive onslaughts—what General Giap calls the comprehensive and continuous offensive. Its proponents believe that no longer is time on their side, because the enemy has an unmatchable advantage in any long grind-down war of attrition: he is bigger, richer, more numerous. Hence, the proper strategy is to press for a quick decision. This group has been described as advocating Go-for-Broke tactics; perhaps that term overstates the case, but what is sought is the quickest victory possible." Giap's role in the adoption of the new strategy remains a subject of debate. Britain's P. J. Honey believes that the change was forced on the DRV Minister of Defense by the majority of the Lao Dong Politburo. He lists Le Duan, General Nguyen Van Vinh and the late General Nguyen Chi Thanh as the major proponents of the regular force strategy and suggests that adoption of the new line represented a complete and total rejection of the doctrine of protracted conflict. He notes: "A group of military experts from China, Cuba, and N. Korea infiltrated S. Vietnam in the early spring of 1967 to assess the situation there and afterwards returned to Hanoi to submit their report and recommendations. It is inconceivable, in the circumstances, that they could have reached any conclusions other than that the protracted warfare being waged in the South was meeting with no success and that the communist side was being destroyed at an accelerating pace."

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(Douglas Pike, War, Peace, and the Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969), p. 136; P. J. Honey, "The Offensive: Hanoi's Change of Strategy", China News Analysis, 22 March 1968.)

Spring 1967-- A captured VC document containing a speech delivered at the 4th Congress of the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) in April of the previous year is released to the press by the US Mission, Vietnam. This speech is said to have been given by General Nguyen Van Vinh, Chairman of the Reunification Department of the Lao Dong Central Committee. It provides valuable insight into the thinking of Hanoi and the NLF with regard to the course of the struggle in the South and the relations of the Vietnamese Communists with Moscow and Peking:

"...On the one hand, we find that international support is fairly good, and, on the other hand, we are worried. The reason for this is that we are fighting the enemy at a time when there is a lack of unity within the socialist camp. This is a reality, Disunity still exists. We cannot just sit by and wait until the socialist camp is united to achieve decisive victory. On the contrary, we must achieve decisive victory within the next four years. Therefore, it is necessary to try to win maximum support. We say that our Party's leadership is correct and our people are heroic. Yet, without international support our success would be limited although we still can achieve it. Generally speaking, the countries in the socialist camp unanimously agree with our line, and wholeheartedly assist us.

Since the downfall of Khrushchev, the Soviet Union has provided us with much assistance in all fields. Three fourths of the weapons sent to the South have been received from the socialist camp. Half of the South's budget has been provided by our camp, mainly China. The quantity of weapons provided has been so large that we could not transport all of them. During the past year, the quantity of equipment provided for the building of the North equalled that received during the five previous years. We have sent back those materials for which we did not yet have requirements, so that we do not lose them or have to maintain them. The socialist camp has agreed to construct mobile missile launching pads, and to establish factories to construct mobile missile launching pads for us.

Nevertheless, we are not satisfied in certain respects. If there were no disunity within the socialist camp, our success would have been greater. Yet, we also find that if we did not obtain the great assistance from our camp, we would not have been able to achieve such great successes. Our party has highly evaluated the support of the socialist camp. If we do not try to gain the support of the socialist camp, we will be guilty of our duty to our people. We cannot accept the line of this country or that

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country in order to obtain aid, nor can we accept aid from one country without accepting aid from another, because otherwise we will be guilty before the entire camp, and before our people.

China said: We must unite and insure the purity of Marxism-Leninism. Yet, only a number of countries have sided with China. The same situation also exists with regard to the Soviet Union. As for us, all countries in the camp, except Yugoslavia, are siding with us. Recently, our party did its best to contribute to the unity within the socialist camp.

At a time when there is a polemic among various countries, we must have an independent line. We must be confident in no one but our own Party. We advocate opposing revisionism, and, at the same time, must take precautionary measures against dogmatism, and must constantly preserve international solidarity.

China said: To positively oppose imperialism without positively opposing revisionism will finally lead to compromise with imperialism. That is not true. If one is revisionist, he does not oppose imperialism, and advocates peaceful co-existence with imperialism.

We do not hold the view that the Soviet leadership is as revisionist as the leadership under Khrushchev, and that it is somewhat more dangerous than Khrushchev.

We hold that the Soviet leadership still contains some revisionists, some indecisive elements, and also active elements.

China said Khrushchev fell because of external causes.

We do not think so. We think that Khrushchev fell because of internal causes, and, of course, the external struggle also was a very important contribution to his downfall.

According to China, things do not have two or three characteristics. This is true. Yet, in a transitionary period when we are not yet positive about everything, we cannot attribute to environmental things this characteristic or another. Instead, we must continue to follow them up before we can draw a correct conclusion." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 11 (Canberra: GPO, 1967), pp. 85-86.)*

Spring 1967-- The US Mission, Vietnam releases a captured document containing a summary of a speech reportedly made by General Nguyen Van Vinh to the April 1966 COSVN Congress held in South Vietnam. Of special interest is a section which treats in detail the Communist strategy of "fighting and negotiating":

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"The resolution of the Party's 11th conference clearly stated that in the process of achieving success a situation where fighting and negotiations are conducted simultaneously may arise. At present, the situation is not yet ripe for negotiations. Fighting while negotiating is aimed at opening another front with a view to making the puppet army more disintegrated, stimulating and developing the enemy's internal contradictions and thereby making him more isolated in order to deprive him of the propaganda weapons, isolate him further, and make a number of people who misunderstand the Americans clearly see their nature.

In a war between a powerful country which waged aggression and a weak country, as long as we have not yet acquired adequate strength, a situation where fighting and negotiations are conducted simultaneously does not exist. Fighting continues until the emergence of a situation where both sides are fighting indecisively. Then a situation where fighting and negotiations are conducted simultaneously may emerge. In fighting while negotiating, the side which fights more strongly will compel the adversary to accept its conditions. Considering the comparative balance of forces, the war proceeds through the following stages:

-- The fighting stage.

-- The stage of fighting while negotiating.

-- Negotiations and signing of agreements.

Whether or not the war will resume after the conclusion of agreements depends upon the comparative balance of forces. If we are capable of dominating the adversary, the war will not break out again, and conversely. Therefore, fighting while negotiating also represents a principal step in the evolution of the war. Thus, a situation where fighting and negotiations are conducted simultaneously will unmistakably emerge. In our anti-French resistance, there were also times when fighting and negotiations were conducted simultaneously. The same situation emerged in China.

At present, there are [different] viewpoints with regard to war and peace.

-- The Americans find it necessary to negotiate, but negotiate from a strong position, partly because they have deceitful motives, and partly because the situation has compelled them to negotiate. Yet, they want us to make concessions to them.

-- A number of countries want us to enter into negotiations, any form of negotiations -- so that a big war does not break out, and

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that the war can be ended -- regardless of the interests of Vietnam. Some other countries wonder whether we can defeat the Americans, and if not, [they think] we should enter into negotiations. (Most of these countries are nationalist countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.) A number of East European socialist countries hold the view that [proper] conditions [for negotiations] do prevail, and are ripe for achieving success. (The Americans would withdraw their troops, and we will continue the struggle to achieve total success.) These socialist countries also pose a number of conditions: cessation of the bombing of the North; gradual withdrawal of U.S. troops from the South.

-- China holds the view that conditions for negotiations are not yet ripe, [and will] not [be] until a few years from now, and, even worse, seven years from now. In the meantime, we should continue fighting to bog down the enemy, and should wait until a number of socialist countries acquire adequate conditions for strengthening their main force troops to launch a strong, all-out, and rapid offensive, using all types of weapons and heeding no borders. What we should do in the South today is to try restraining the enemy and make him bogged down, waiting until China has built strong forces to launch an all-out offensive.

-- Our policy: to continue fighting until a certain time when we can fight and negotiate at the same time.

This is also a fighting method: repulsing the enemy step by step, and achieving decisive success.

The Party Central Committee entrusts the Politburo with the task of deciding on the time for negotiations.

<u>The problem of choosing the opportunity and deciding to negotiate</u>:

-- Basing ourselves upon the actual situation in the South.

-- Considering the opinions of the friendly countries which have provided us with quite a large volume of assistance, in order to gain their maximum support.

The future situation may lead to negotiations. Yet, even if there are negotiations, they are [to be] conducted simultaneously with fighting. While negotiating, we will continue fighting the enemy more vigorously. (It is possible that the North conducts negotiations while the South continues fighting, and that the South also participates in the negotiations while continuing to fight). Those who are in charge of conducting negotiations negotiate and those in charge of fighting continue

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fighting, because the decisive factor lies in the battlefield. The enemy wants us to stop fighting, for his advantage. But we have to fight. Therefore, the enemy also fights. We must fight to win great victories with which to compel the enemy to accept our conditions. If we stop fighting (at that stage), no considerable success can be achieved in negotiations. If we conduct negotiations while fighting vigorously, we can also take advantage of the opportunity to step up the political struggle, military proselyting, and activities in the cities. Thus, we will take advantage of the opportunity offered by the negotiations to step up further our military attacks, political struggle, and military proselyting. At present, the Americans have put forth deceitful arguments. Therefore, we must put forth conditions to prove that we fight for the aspirations and interests of the people and thereby win the support of various countries.

If the enemy wants to negotiate, he must accept a number of conditions, such as, to permanently cease his war of destruction against the North, withdraw his troops from the South, and dismantle his military bases. The failure to pose the above conditions is tantamount to implicitly accepting the Americans' presence in the South.

Depending on the situation prevailing at the time, we will impose conditions. For example, the puppet forces must be concentrated in barracks, must not repress the people, must not carry out espionage activities, must allow the people to move about freely or choose their places or residence, must not herd the people into strategic hamlets and concentration centers; the American troops must be stationed at the wharfs.

The basic situation prevailing in the South for the past years requires that we attack the enemy more vigorously. This front involves millions of people. While attacking, we must concentrate all our forces on fighting the enemy." *(Joint US Public Affairs Office, Vietnam: Documents and Research Notes, no. 8 (Saigon: JUSPAO, 1967), pp. 4-6.)*

1 April-- In response to a newsman's questions, U Thant says that his three points for ending the Vietnam conflict still stand. He states: "Cessation of the bombing is a pre-requisite" for other actions in line with the proposals, and "it must be accompanied by a general understanding on a stand-still truce. Supervision of the truce, in the present circumstances, is impractical." *(90th Cong 1st Sess, Background Information on Southeast Asia and Vietnam (Third Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1967), p. 308.)*

3 April-- Hanoi's Nhan Dan comments on U Thant's peace proposal:

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"...U.N. Secretary General U Thant made public in his private capacity a three-stage proposal on the Viet-Nam problem, envisaging: first, a general standstill truce, second, preliminary talks, and third, the reconvening of the Geneva Conference.

The above proposal is aimed at restoring peace in Viet-Nam but, regrettably, it does not proceed from the fact that the war in Viet-Nam has been unleashed by the U.S. imperialists. Furthermore, it puts the victim of aggression on the same footing as the aggressor...

U Thant has advanced four forms of preliminary talks:

-- Direct talks between the Government of DRV and the Government of the United States;

-- Direct talks between the two above governments, with the participation of the cochairmen of the 1954 Geneva Conference;

-- Direct talks between the two above governments, with the participation of the members of the International Control Commission;

-- Direct talks between the two above governments with the participation of the cochairmen of the 1954 Geneva Conference and the members of the International Control Commission.

None of these forms contain any reference to the NFLSV. The fact is that the NFLSV is leading the South Vietnamese people in their struggle against the U.S. Imperialists' aggression and already controls four-fifths of the territory with two-thirds of the population of South Viet-Nam. The U.S. Imperialists' armed forces are fighting against the Front's armed forces. To attempt to solve the South Viet-Nam problem without recognizing the NFLSV is to ignore reality.

...[T]he basic content of the four-point stand of the DRV Government...embodies the essential principles and provisions of the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Viet-Nam. It is the basis of a correct political solution to the Viet-Nam problem..."
(Joint US Public Affairs Office, Viet-Nam: Documents and Research Notes, no. 8 (Saigon: JUSPAO, 1967), pp. 8-9.)

3 April-- On this date, Radio Liberation broadcasts an NLF Command Order of 15 March. It states:

"The US rebel clique is shifting toward a large-scale pincer tactic, and is continuing to step up violently its neocolonialist aggressive war. Another noteworthy point of this scheme is

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that a large part of the rebel armed forces and a part of the US and satellite forces are being used to carry out the pacification task...

...The enemy is concentrating great efforts on training a group of lackeys, the so-called pacification cadres, and organising them into groups to follow the rebel forces to deceive and repress our population...

...To deceive people and a number of elements in the rebel armed forces, they say that these pacification groups are not military or police organisations but are civilian groups whose mission is to develop the revolution. By so saying they want to cover up the criminal acts of repressing and massacring our people by those pacification groups. Therefore, the Liberation Armed Forces command orders all its men, from the guerillas and regional troops to regular forces of all armed services to:

1. Endeavour to step up, while firmly holding to the guiding thoughts, the determined-to-fight-and-win movements and the movements to search and destroy the US aggressors and their henchmen; to consider the US aggressors' pacification groups as a kind of rebel armed forces serving as armed lackeys of the US aggressors...

2. The armed forces should rely on the practical situation to fight and destroy the pacification groups in order to defend the people. They should particularly aim at the commanders and cruel elements of the pacification groups, and should try by every means possible to explain to peace-seekers who have been deceived or forced to join the pacification group that they should oppose, quit, and denounce the cruel leaders.

3. The exploits in destroying the pacification groups must also be subject to the award system. Combatants, cadres, and units who have achieved good performance in destroying the pacification groups can be granted the title 'determined-to-win fighters', which is equivalent to the title 'Elite fighter against US aggressors'." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 11 (Canberra: GPO, 1967), p. 86.)*

5 April-- Laotian Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma contradicts the expressed opinion of US officials that the Pathet Lao is only a front for the North Vietnamese forces in Laos. He says that the "15,000 Pathet Lao are a well-disciplined political party, the only political party in this country. The army is not a political instrument, and there is no other organized political party." He admits, however, that it is "the Vietnamese who attack our forces almost invariably. Then they turn over

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the hamlet they have captured to the Pathet Lao, and the Pathet Lao usually gives way if our troops counterattack with sufficient vigor." He states: "Get rid of the Vietnamese, and the Pathet Lao's military importance will be greatly reduced." *(New York Times, 7 April 1967, p. 8.)*

7-9 April-- On 7 April, Norodom Sihanouk announces that 48 Cambodian Communist terrorists have been arrested after recent attacks by Communist bands in Battambang Province. Two days later, he denounces the United States as an aggressor in Asia, while accepting in a speech Soviet war material, including five MIG-17 jet fighter planes. *(New York Times, 8 and 10 April 1967, pp. 5 and 18 respectively.)*

15 April-- Peking radio broadcasts a denunciation of the meetings between U Thant and Indian P.M. Indira Gandhi, held in New Delhi from 10-13 April. The Chinese accuse the participants of plotting "a new peace fraud under US stage-managing." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 11 (Canberra: GPO, 1967), p. 93.)*

16 April-- The DRV rejects a Canadian peace proposal calling for a freeze on current military positions. Hanoi reaffirms its stand "that peace talks might be possible if the United States unconditionally stops bombing the North." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 220e.)*

21 April-- The USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs delivers a note to the Australian Embassy in Moscow: "Recently the Australian Government significantly increased its troops in Viet-Nam and transferred to American command the rocket destroyer 'Hobart'. Thereby, it is taking a new step towards broadening aggression against the freedom-loving Vietnamese people...The attempts of the Australian Government to base and justify its crude intervention in the internal affairs of another country by arguments about some kind of 'threat' to Australia from the North are not in accordance with the facts. Viet-Nam has never threatened Australia—no Vietnamese soldier has ever set foot on Australian soil. In the same way no Australian interests are affected by internal Vietnamese events...The Australian Government bears full responsibility for the consequences of its participation in aggression against the Vietnamese people." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 11 (Canberra: GPO, 1967), p. 98.)*

21 April-- The DRV Foreign Ministry issues a statement which reads:

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"On 19 April 1967, the US Government put forward a proposal for a widening of the demilitarised zone to north and south by ten miles on either side, and a cessation of all military activities in the whole zone. It said that the proposal was in response to the four-stage plan of Canada...

...It is the United States which has sabotaged the statute of the demilitarised zone and the provisional military demarcation line. It has cut off all movements of the people north and south of the provisional military demarcation line, has illegally sent armed forces into the demilitarised zone, suppressed and terrorised the people in the south, and embarked on provocations against the people in the north.

Since July 1966, it has on many occasions used B-52 strategic planes to bomb the demilitarised zone. It has launched many big sweeps very near the demarcation line area, and sprayed toxic chemicals on and savagely bombed villages in the northern part of the demilitarised zone. More serious still, since mid-February 1967, it has brazenly used artillery based in the south for repeated shellings across the provisional military demarcation line against the demilitarised zone and the area north of the zone which belongs to the territory of the DRV. Since April 1967, it has removed the population from the demilitarised zone and the adjoining areas in an attempt to turn it into a no-man's land.

At present, with a view to retrieving their heavy defeats in South Viet-Nam during the 1966-67 dry season, the US imperialists are frenziedly escalating the war and preparing for still more serious escalation in the two zones of Viet-Nam.

The US proposal for a widening of the demilitarised zone by ten miles on either side is precisely a trick aimed at camouflaging the US war escalation...and at the same time, setting up a vast no-man's land perpetually partitioning Viet-Nam.

The DRV Foreign Ministry energetically condemns and rejects the deceitful proposal...The DRV Government demands that the US Government respect the statute of the demilitarised zone as stipulated by the Geneva Agreements, stop at once all military activities in the air, on the sea, on land, and on the river in the demilitarised zone, and strictly respect the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Viet-Nam." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 11 (Canberra: GPO, 1967), p. 31.)*

24 April-- DRV Premier Pham Van Dong, in an interview with the chief editor of the Tokyo newspaper, Asahi Evening News, reiterates that "we will not be in haste" to achieve peaceful reunification after the war ends.

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(Melvin Gurtov, Hanoi on War and Peace (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, P-3696, 1967), p. 31.)

26 April-- U Thant takes issue with the US Government's contention that it is fighting against "Communist aggression" in Vietnam. He says: "Nationalism, not communism, is the ideology animating the resistance movement in Vietnam against a succession of foreign powers through the years. The war cannot be brought to an end until this fundamental fact is recognized." *(Baltimore Sun, 27 April 1967), p. 4.)*

29 April-- In an address before the American Assembly, Ambassador at Large W. Averell Harriman speaks on "The United States and Eastern Europe in Perspective." He says: "I am satisfied the Soviet and the Eastern European governments would like to see the Viet-Nam war ended. They believe it contributes primarily to Peking's interests, and they do not want a confrontation with us. They want stability in Europe. The Soviets want to make progress in the control of nuclear weapons and want to be able to reduce military expenditures. Their resources are already strained, and they would like to devote more of their resources to improving the living conditions which their people are demanding. But we must expect them to continue to give assistance to a sister Communist country, North Viet-Nam, which they consider an overriding obligation." *(Department of State Bulletin, vol 56, p. 821.)*

30 April-- Peking's People's Daily publishes a long official "Observer" article entitled "Soviet Revisionist Clique is Rank Traitor to Vietnamese Revolution". It details instances of Moscow's "betrayal" of the Vietnamese comrades, stating that "in the more than two years since...[Khrushchev's ouster] the Soviet revisionist ruling clique has worked hand in glove with US imperialism, followed it at every step and co-ordinated with it closely on a series of conspiratorial activities of unscrupulously and repeatedly resorting to the 'peace talks' fraud and alternating this with war blackmail...they want the heroic Vietnamese people to lay down their arms, stop their resistance, bend the knee and capitulate to US imperialism." Specific instances of Soviet betrayal are reviewed:

"In January 1965, the Soviet Government, on Washington's instructions, transmitted to the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam the peremptory US demand for an end to the North Vietnamese people's support for the South Vietnamese people.

On 6 February, Kosygin visited Hanoi. There he had the impudence to declare that he would help the United States 'to find a way out in Viet-Nam'.

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On 16 February, directly upon Kosygin's return to Moscow, the Soviet Government proposed the holding of a new international conference, 'without any preconditions', on the Indo-China question. This proposal was in fact the precursor of Johnson's 'unconditional discussions' fraud.

Thus, Brezhnev and Kosygin from the very beginning made it clear to the United States by these three actions that they were willing to do their utmost to serve US imperialism on the Viet-Nam question, and that they would give it greater help than Khrushchev did.

1. On 12 May 1965, the United States used the 'bombing halt' trick for the first time. The idea originated with the Soviet revisionist ruling clique. In a note to the Communist Parties of a number of countries shortly before the bombing halt, it stated clearly that it was in favour of negotiations with the United States provided the United States stopped its bombing of North Viet-Nam.

2. On 24 December 1965, the United States 'halted bombing' for the second time and then released its so-called '14 points' to induce 'peace talks' through a bombing halt. Before the United States announced this manoeuvre, it had made known its decision to the Soviet Union. Directly afterwards, the Soviet revisionists announced the dispatch of a delegation headed by Shelepin to visit Viet-Nam. Even Lyndon Johnson said that as the bombing halt was proposed by the Soviet revisionist ruling clique through its Ambassador Dobrynin, it was to be called the 'Dobrynin bombing halt'.

3. On 31 January 1966, the United States resumed bombing. At the same time, it put forward a 'resolution' in the UN Security Council on 'immediate and unconditional discussion'. In the latter part of February, Kosygin met with British Prime Minister Wilson in Moscow to engineer 'peace talks' and they shouted in unison that 'military means cannot solve the Viet-Nam question'.

4. On 29 March 1966, the United States, through Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, proposed the convening of a new Geneva Conference for another try at peddling the 'peace talks' fraud. Subsequently, Kosygin conferred with Indira Gandhi in Moscow. After the talk, Indira Gandhi said that she had conferred with the Soviet leader on the convening of a 'conference' on the basis of the Geneva Agreements'.

5. On 29 June 1966, the United States took the outrageous step of bombing Hanoi and Haiphong, having served prior notice to the Kremlin. At the same time, Johnson and Rusk openly called on the Soviet revisionist ruling clique to convene the Geneva Conference to help the United States 'end the Viet-Nam war'.

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The Soviet revisionist chieftains followed this up by holding talks with the leaders of Canada, India and Britain and the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Soviet-Canadian joint communique urged the 'reconvening of the Geneva Conference', while the Soviet-Indian joint communique claimed that 'the solution of the problem of Viet-Nam can be found only within the framework of the Geneva Agreements'.

6. In September 1966, the US delegate to the United Nations put forward the 'three-point proposal' in the General Assembly and brazenly called for the 'good offices of the Soviet Union'. Gromyko immediately jumped to his feet with a pledge of Soviet willingness to 'co-operate'. Subsequently, in his talk with Johnson in the White House, Gromyko advised that, if only the United States would 'stop bombing North Viet-Nam', a settlement to the question could be found. After that, Johnson declared with elation: 'I have never felt more encouraged'.

7. In the latter part of October 1966, the United States called together all its satellites in its war of aggression against Viet-Nam for a gangsters' meeting in Manila with a view to forcing 'peace talks' through war. At the same time, the Soviet revisionist ruling clique also called a meeting of the leaders of some East European countries in Moscow. According to a US news agency dispatch from Moscow, that meeting was 'part of...Soviet efforts to settle the war'.

8. In the early days of December 1966, the United States repeatedly bombed Hanoi. The US delegate to the United Nations followed this up with a letter to UN Secretary-General, U Thant, urging him to help the United States realise 'peace talks'. Just before the US began the bombing of Hanoi, Soviet Vice-Foreign Minister Kuznetsov had paid a hurried visit to New York to urge U Thant to intervene on the Viet-Nam question and expressed Soviet willingness to 'persuade' the Vietnamese people 'to come to the conference table'.

9. In February 1967, during the 'Tet truce' in Viet-Nam, the United States once again used the trick of halting bombing to induce 'peace talks'. Prior to that, the Soviet revisionist chieftains and their propaganda agencies, in close co-ordination with Washington, had stirred up an evil wind lasting several months, for stopping the bombing to get 'peace talks' going. After the United States halted the bombing, Kosygin rushed to London and proclaimed there that, if the United States 'would stop bombing the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam', the various sides concerned 'would come to the conference table'. Under these circumstances, the United States demanded 'reciprocal action' on the part of the Vietnamese people in exchange for US halting of its bombing of North Viet-Nam. During the Soviet-British

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talks which were held by remote control from Washington, Kosygin made earnest efforts to help the United States realise its monstrous plot of 'peace talks'.

10. On 20 and 21 March 1967, Johnson called the Guam Conference to plan further expansion of the war of aggression against Viet-Nam in an attempt to force capitulation through war. Around this period, Kosygin received the US Ambassador in Moscow, and Rusk met with the Soviet Ambassador in Washington, for confidential talks on the Viet-Nam question. Meanwhile, the Soviet revisionist delegate to the United Nations conferred time and again with the US delegate and the UN Secretary-General. Soon afterwards, U Thant's 'three-step proposal' which was a new product of US-Soviet conspiracy, was made public."

In conclusion, the article declares, "under no circumstances will we take any 'united action' with you who are a pack of rank traitors to the Viet-Nam revolution..." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 11 (Canberra: GPO, 1967), pp. 103-05.)*

May-- Nguyen Van Tien, recently-appointed permanent representative of the NLF to Hanoi, tells a Japanese correspondent that there are fundamental differences between North and South Vietnam. In the post-settlement period, the South would be neutral and unaligned in its foreign policy and probably would not seek diplomatic recognition from other states; economically and politically, the two zones are also (in an unspecified way) unique. *(Melvin Gurtov, Hanoi on War and Peace (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, P-3696, 1967), pp. 30-31.)*

May-- The Soviet-oriented international journal World Marxist Review scans the growing isolationism of the Johnson Administration on the Vietnam issue. It describes LBJ's problems as being a "crisis of confidence" and suggests that the war "has always been unpopular in the United States and there can be no question that opposition to it will mount in step with escalation. So will the worldwide movement of solidarity with the people of Vietnam." *(Jan Prazsky, "Stop the Aggression", World Marxist Review, X, no. 5 (May 1967), pp. 80-82.)*

6-8 May-- On 8 May, a State Department spokesman announces that the US Government is concerned that American prisoners of war in North Vietnam were paraded through the streets of Hanoi on 6 May and put on display at a press conference. These actions are a flagrant violation of the Geneva Convention, and the action was especially disturbing since there were indications that one or more of the prisoners were wounded and unwell. The United States Government has repeatedly called upon Hanoi to

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respect the Geneva Convention to which it adhered in 1957. The US Government is protesting the matter to the DRV through the International Committee of the Red Cross. *(Department of State Bulletin, vol 56, p. 825.)*

8 May-- A broadcast entitled "Struggle for the People's Hearts and Minds" is aired over the VC Radio Liberation to South Vietnam. It comments:

"...In earmarking a large budget of 80,000,000 dollars, which covers only expenditures on psychological warfare tricks, for the implementation of the rural pacification programme in 1967, using more than half a million puppet troops, more than 20 battalions of US troops, and more than 1,500 US civilian specialists, and throwing thousands of rural pacification teams into the field, the US aggressors have given the rural pacification programme a strategic position which is of special importance and which determines the victory or defeat of their aggressive war in the south.

At the Honolulu conference, rural pacification was one of the key objectives contained in Westmorland's five-point plan, and the strategic two-pronged plan worked out at the Manila Conference was based upon Westmoreland's five-point plan. The first prong consists of what is called 'search and destroy' in regard to our main-force units; launching continuous and very fierce attacks on our base and storage facilities, and keeping our main-force units busy and, thereby, preventing them from supporting the guerilla war movement. This prong is aimed at providing a shield for the puppet troops and rural pacification teams to carry out the so-called struggle to win the hearts and minds of the people.

The second prong consists of concentrating forces to attack and destroy our revolutionary bases, intensifying terrorism, and particularly, coping with the guerilla movement...

...The rural pacification programme was made a strategic objective with a view to regaining the initiative on the battlefield and trying to win some victories in order to carry out deceitful psychological warfare tricks and shore up the puppet army and administration, which are disintegrating and shaken to their roots.

...The two prongs have been conducted simultaneously, and they stimulate each other. Therefore, if one prong is broken, the other will become useless...

The failure of the rural pacification programme not only destroys the aggressive dream and causes disappointment within the ranks of the US ruling clique, but it also buries the prestige of leading

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warmonger Johnson and threatens his position in next year's US presidential elections.

We successively frustrated the land development plan and crushed the strategic-hamlet national policy of Diem and Nhu. Therefore, at the outset, we did not (word indistinct) the wicked US-Thieu-Ky rural pacification plot. We have nipped it in the bud and we have continued to destroy it since it was born.

The command of the Liberation Armed Forces has ordered the Liberation Armed Forces to annihilate the pacification units wherever they are—when they are committing crimes in villages and hamlets or when they are hiding in their dens. On all South Vietnamese battlefields, from Tri Thien to the Mekong River Delta, from the liberated areas to the contested areas, our armed forces and people have unanimously searched for and destroyed the pacification hooligans. With their deeply penetrating spearheads, the guerillas have pressed the enemy hard in his rear and dealt his pacification units deadly blows..." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 11 (Canberra: GPO, 1967), pp. 106-08.)*

11 May-- At a luncheon in New York, U Thant states: "I am afraid we are witnessing today the initial phase of World War III... If the present trend continues, I am afraid direct confrontation, first of all between Washington and Peking, is inevitable. I hope I am wrong." He believes that only Hanoi is keeping the Chinese out of the war. He feels that any full-scale bombing of downtown Hanoi or major setback for North Vietnamese regulars might break this barrier to Peking's entry into the conflict. He repeats his belief that only an unconditional end to American bombing can lead to peace talks. He agrees with Secretary McNamara that bombing will not significantly reduce the actual flow of men and material to the South and adds that it has only strengthened the DRV's determination. *(Christian Science Monitor, 13 May 1967.)*

21 May-- Although not revealing the source of their information, Senators Albert Gore and Joseph Clark, members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, state that Peking advised the United States months ago that it would intervene in Vietnam if the DRV capitulated, if North Vietnam or China were invaded by land, or if China were bombed. Senator Gore comments that these warnings should cause the United States to "take caution," since they are similar to warnings that preceded Chinese intervention in the Korean War. Senator Clark adds that he believes that an honorable settlement can be reached if the United States would stop the bombing of the North and if American troops "fire only when fired upon." *(New York Times, 22 May 1967.)*

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29 May-- In a statement at Pacem in Terris Convocation, Geneva, Switzerland, Marian Dobrosielski, advisor to the Foreign Minister of Poland declares: "We hear about reciprocity for the stopping of the bombing, but what kind of reciprocity?... [T]he Americans started the bombing, and they must stop it. That is all there is to it." *(Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs, Mission to Hanoi (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), p. 338.)*

31 May-2 June-- Patrick J. McGarvey of the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace comments in his book Visions of Victory on the DRV/VC assessments of the just-completed Dry Season campaign of 1966-67. In particular, he refers to articles published by General Nguyen Chi Thanh on 31 May and by Truong Son in June. Both articles were published in the DRV armed forces' Quan Doi Nhan Dan. McGarvey states:

"...The war in the South ground on through the spring. When the time for an assessment of the Communist position presented itself in early summer, the articles that appeared suggested that the basic issue was no longer offensive versus defensive strategy. The events of the dry season, including the flurry of peace rumors from December to February and the opening of large-scale military operations near the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), had tempered both sides. The grueling campaigns throughout South Vietnam had apparently shown both Thanh and Hanoi that a military victory could not be assured merely by the discovery of the best military strategy. The political facets of the war—the question of negotiations and of subordinating the military effort to political objectives—emerged as major concerns. North and South appeared to have reached an understanding on the military approach to the war. The sobering thought that the Communist forces might not be able to achieve a purely military victory had been entertained by both sides, but it did not lead to dismay. Rather, it seemed to bring the disputants closer to a more realistic appraisal of the military situation, and to a common approach to the future.

In contrast to those that had appeared in previous years, the analyses that emerged in the summer of 1967 were remarkably sober. The effervescence of the past gave way to a hard-headed view of the Communist position that held out the hope of ultimate victory despite the difficult times that lay ahead. These analyses called for no quick or easy solution, and they subscribed to no timetable or single military strategy. Instead, they called on all Vietnamese Communists to unite and conduct a variety of operations on the battlefield that would sustain a credible military threat and would prolong the war until political, military, and psychological factors combined to produce a solution favorable to their cause. The concept of a military

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stalemate, espoused by Communists in both North and South, appears for the first time in these writings, which thus mark a major turning point in the Communists' view of the war. The concept does not, however, carry a defeatist connotation, for the Communists take pride in their relative success against the world's greatest military power. They believed that they had maintained a certain amount of initiative on the battlefield in the 1966-67 dry season, and both parties to the original dispute called for continued efforts to retain this initiative.

As before, General Thanh and Truong Son presented the views from the battlefield. (Thanh's article, incidentally, was his last; according to Radio Hanoi, he died in late June or early July 1967.) Noticeably absent from Thanh's analysis...were the personal attack on an unnamed Northern leader, presumably General Giap, and the insistence on the continued use of main-force units in large-scale clashes with American forces that had characterized his analysis of the 1965-66 dry season. By the time his article was written, the parties to the dispute may have reached a compromise on the basic approach to the 1967-68 dry season, making it unnecessary for Thanh to either attack his adversaries or insist on the correctness of his own views. Uncharacteristically, Thanh began his analysis on a defensive note, by describing the size of the American buildup during the past year. He was at pains to explain how many Allied troops faced him on the field, the variety of weapons they used, and the amount of money the United States was spending to support its forces in the field. He laid claim to a number of military victories, but as before, offered little proof of them. His entire analysis was intended to cast the most favorable possible light on the ability of his forces to avoid defeat in the face of the massive American buildup and bring about a military stalemate. Pacification efforts by American and South Korean forces had been severely disrupted by main-force and guerrilla actions. The changing of United States Ambassadors to Saigon was presented as another Communist victory. Thanh claimed that 'Operation Junction City,' conducted by American forces in Tay Ninh Province, was a failure, though he did not explain how or why. He described the seven-month dry-season campaign as the 'most violent phase of the entire war,' and stated that the future would remain difficult and would require 'more patience and tremendous effort for final victory.' As for the upcoming 1967-68 dry season, Thanh contented himself with stating that the recently concluded campaign had 'created new prospects for moving ahead.' He did not repeat the call for continued large-scale offensive actions that he had issued the year before.

Again, the task of describing in detail the military achievements of the past dry season fell to the anonymous Truong Son, who described the Communists' view of American plans in the summer

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of 1966 and the steps they had taken to counter them...He also summed up the lessons learned during the campaign.

During the summer of 1966, according to Truong Son, a series of strategy sessions were held in the South. The Communist leaders had examined every aspect of American fighting methods, and had made estimates of American intentions, the number of American troops they could expect to face in the coming dry season American capabilities in the field, and finally, the areas in which American forces would operate. The Communists expected the Americans to concentrate on finishing the complex of logistical bases during the rest of the summer, so that by the fall they would be in a position to mount larger search-and-destroy operations in hopes of breaking the back of the Viet Cong's main-force units. Truong Son disclosed that the Viet Cong had decided to use the rainy season to expand their intelligence operations so that they could detect the shifts of supplies and men that would precede large American operations in the next dry season, and thus be in a better position to counter them.

The past dry season campaign had brought increased respect for American strategy, and the Communists expected that search-and-destroy missions of broadened scope would be coordinated with pacification efforts and also would be used to widen the 'safety corridor' around American bases. The American concept of defense, unlike the French, Truong Son lamented, is 'a mobile one.' (The French had relied heavily on a series of forts throughout the Red River Delta, a strategy the Viet Minh found easy to neutralize by simply infiltrating behind the line of forts and isolating them.) The Viet Cong leaders estimated the total number of American, South Vietnamese, South Korean, and other Allied troops they could expect to face in the next dry season as one million, but their experience with American logistical requirements led them to conclude that despite the overall increase in numbers, the actual number of combat troops would not change significantly.

During the summer strategy session, Truong Son implied, the basic issue of offensive versus defensive strategy had been thoroughly discussed. It was at this session that Thanh had decided to continue mounting large-scale operations. Truong Son presented an unconvincing defense of this decision. Between October 1966, and February 1967, he claimed, the Viet Cong had mounted a series of 'strategic' attacks and counterattacks, but his failure to supply any supporting details strongly suggests that the Communists' offensive plans had been thwarted. This is the only passage of his analysis to claim success for large-scale offensive actions. The October-February time frame suggests that a shift in strategy or at least in emphasis was implemented about mid-way

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through the dry-season campaign. In listing Viet Cong actions taken to thwart American plans, he places greater emphasis on guerrilla actions than either he or Thanh ever had before. The Communists had broadened the war by expanding all three categories of troops—guerrillas, local forces, and main forces. Attacks were carried out in the highlands, in the cities, and along the coasts, and in Truong Son's words, these attacks stressed the 'coordination of guerrilla and main-force units.' He further claimed that the Viet Cong had consolidated their base areas and liberated zones—a step that had been recommended by Cuu Long as the dry season got under way. The consolidation of base areas and liberated zones required that increased attention be given to political aspects of Viet Cong organization: that cadres be selected and trained to administer areas under Viet Cong control, that agitation and propaganda teams be sent out, that recruiting programs be stepped up, and in general that the political arm of the Viet Cong be given status equal to the military.

Truong Son also asserted the guerrilla forces had been relied on to keep the enemy off balance. He praised the many mortar attacks on Danang and Tan Son Nhut airbases that had been carried out by small squads of men, and claimed that the guerrillas were 'as effective as if we had an Air Force.' The unusual praise for small-unit military actions was extended to similar political actions as well, and while the praise may be somewhat exaggerated, it nevertheless indicates that the Communist leadership in the South underwent a change of heart as the 1966-67 dry season wore on. This is not to suggest that Thanh lost his basic faith in offense, but rather that he gained a greater appreciation of the usefulness of guerrilla forces and came to rely more heavily on them. Spectacular raids on United States airbases that inflict millions of dollars worth of damage do not go unnoticed—in fact they are accorded worldwide publicity—and the Southern leadership no doubt basked in the worldwide glow of headlines, realizing that the raids not only had scored a military blow but also had gained an immeasurable psychological advantage.

Truong Son and Thanh both initially viewed the relegation of the South Vietnamese Army to pacification duties as a move favorable to their cause. They set out to take advantage of this by "combining armed political struggle with 'agitprop' among ARVN," but Truong Son admitted that 'agitprop among the South Vietnamese Army was not successful.' A campaign entitled 'Annihilate the Enemy and Maintain the People's Authority' was also proclaimed to counter the pacification program. Shorn of its jargon, this program reminded local Viet Cong cadres not to lose sight of the objective of continually expanding territory under their control and organizing political forces in these areas to counter pacification. Propaganda cadres were sent forth into areas under

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Saigon's control to stir up the local populace with programs for reduced rents and the like. Ethnic minorities were also targeted, for increased propaganda activity.

Truong Son showed some concern in his analysis for increasing the efficiency of the Communist armed forces, the sort of worry that usually besets an organization when it is falling short of its objectives. The measures he mentions as having improved the combat efficiency of the armed forces again testify to a shift in attitudes among the leadership. Thanh had previously emphasized the use of concentrated force to carry the day, but Truong Son now emphasizes the selective use of force. Before large-unit attacks, for example, local, guerrilla, and main-force units were to scatter, harass, and generally soften up the main body of the opposition. More selective targets were chosen when large units clashed, according to Truong Son. Riflemen were told to aim for officers, helicopter pilots, armored-car drivers, and gunners in encounters with American forces. Guerrilla and local forces were to focus on intelligence agents and pacification teams. In striving for 'a rational division of combat tasks,' Truong Son warned, the Communists must not be 'blinded by the old concept of concentrating superior forces.' He indirectly admitted that the October-February offensive actions were not altogether successful. His own words convey the process by which the thinking of the leadership had matured on this subject:

'Facts have proved that if we attach importance only to launching large-scale attacks and do not pay attention to developing small-scale attacks and closely combining large-scale attacks with small-scale and medium-scale attacks, we will be unsuccessful in mounting large-scale attacks, and will be, moreover, imperiled. However, paying attention only to launching small-scale attacks is not sound either, because if we mount only small-scale attacks and do not resolutely create the conditions for developing large-scale attacks, not only will we be unable to increase our ability to annihilate the enemy and change the balance of forces to our advantage, but we will also be unable to maintain and develop the small-scale attacks themselves.'

Truong Son's closing paragraphs underscored the lessons the Southern leadership had learned during the bitter 1966-67 dry season. Reality has shown, he said, that without guerrilla warfare there can be no concentrated assaults. Large units played an important role, but had to be 'blended' with guerrilla activities. The thinking of the Communist battlefield command had thus undergone a major change in the course of one year. Implicit throughout the analyses of Truong Son and Thanh is the admission that a clear-cut military victory was beyond their reach. Having realized this, as they apparently did mid-way in the 1966-67 campaign, the Southern leaders had to

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lower their sights and settle for protracting the conflict. This in turn required the many internal shifts that Truong Son enumerates.

Conspicuously absent from the analyses of Thanh and Truong Son is any mention of the Communists' decision to open the 'Tri-Thien Front,' which led to massive ground operations conducted by line divisions of the North Vietnamese Army near the 17th parallel. As we shall see, General Giap considered this the key strategic decision taken during the 1966-67 campaign. It is possible that Hanoi made the decision after only cursory consultation with Thanh, and Thanh and Truong Son may be indicating their resentment of the move by ignoring it completely." *(Patrick J. McGarvey, Visions of Victory (Stanford: Stanford University, 1969), pp. 17-22; Texts of speeches in Ibid., pp. 114-49.)*

June-- American journalists Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs interview DRV Ambassador to France and non-Communist Europe Mai Van Bo. They report:

"Van Bo asked if we had any specific suggestions.

Ashmore replied that we could, on our own motion, offer to arrange a private meeting of influential persons from the United States on a wholly unofficial basis, if Hanoi desired the Center to make such arrangements. If, however, Hanoi desired to take the discussion to the official level—while still maintaining complete privacy—we could only offer to recommend such action to our government. Baggs added that he could say that he had every reason to believe that Washington would respond favorably to such a suggestion, because, he emphasized, he was personally convinced that Washington is willing to discuss all reasonable prospects to end the conflict.

Van Bo then asked what we thought might be the subject matter of such a meeting.

Ashmore replied that he understood that Hanoi now stands on the proposition that there can be no official discussion of the possibility of a settlement until the bombing of the DRV has been halted. Did this necessarily, he asked, preclude a preliminary discussion of a possible agenda for such a meeting—to be held privately and on the understanding that no further meeting would be held at all unless the bombing were in fact halted? This, he stressed, would not be a meeting as such, but an exploratory conversation, and would not be binding in any way upon either party to it. He noted that while both Washington and Hanoi had publicly indicated they would be willing to undertake discussions without any prior limitation on subject matter, it was certainly true in Washington, and he assumed in

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Hanoi, that there were those who felt the ultimate negotiations would be greatly facilitated if some prior agreement on agenda could be reached, at least informally.

Van Bo evidenced considerable interest in this suggestion, and asked a series of questions to clarify the terms. At this point Van Bo said he would prepare very complete notes on our conversation and forward them to Hanoi.

Baggs said that Ashmore and he felt there was some measure of misunderstanding about whether Hanoi would begin talks with our government promptly after a cessation of the bombing. Van Bo said that his government would not refuse conversations between the two governments if the bombing were stopped unconditionally. Baggs and Ashmore asked twice more to make clear the position of Hanoi. Van Bo twice answered that Hanoi would talk if the bombing were stopped without conditions...

It perhaps should be noted that only toward the conclusion of this conversation was the NLF mentioned by Van Bo. This was injected into the conversation without any attempt to state a condition for future conversation that would necessarily involve participation by the NLF. We avoided raising the question deliberately, and it is fair to say that it arose only most incidentally in the body of these conversations."
(Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs, Mission to Hanoi (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), pp. 103-04.)

13 June-- Norodom Sihanouk announces that his Government will establish relations with North Vietnam and will exchange ambassadors. He says that the DRV and the NLF have agreed to recognize Cambodia's present boundaries. A Moscow dispatch of Tass, the official Soviet press agency, confirms that Hanoi has approved the NLF move and, for its own part, "recognizes the border and pledges to respect it." *(New York Times, 14 June 1967, p. 4.)*

13-16 June-- On these dates Radio Hanoi's Domestic Service to South Vietnam broadcasts a detailed analysis of the North Vietnamese side of the air war by the Chief of Staff of the DRV People's Army, General Van Tien Dung. Patrick J. McGarvey notes, with regard to this broadcast:

"...Previous comments from Hanoi had been largely limited to reports of individual air encounters and American losses. General Dung's studious approach to the subject sheds much light on the problems encountered by the North Vietnamese, particularly the tradition-bound military hierarchy, in coping with modern air defense...

Dung has repeated the same theme with varying degrees of candor since 1964...He has continued to emphasize that it is 'the people,' not the weapons, who form the backbone of air defense.

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With the initiation of the American air campaign, the 'central task' of the North Vietnamese economy, according to Dung, became that of ensuring communications and transport, which meant, in essence, supporting the Communist forces in the South. The entire economic organization of the country had to be redirected, and needless to say, Dung's analysis claimed that the change in direction was smoothly accomplished. Civilians were organized to participate in the war and military production, in air defense, civil defense, and road repair. (Admiral Sharp has estimated that the North Vietnamese have 500,000-600,000 people working on the roads alone.) Dung also claimed that in addition to reorganizing to defend the North and ensure the flow of war materiel south, a foundation had been laid for the postwar reconstruction of the country. All these accomplishments, to Dung's mind, demonstrated the superiority of socialism. He claimed that despite enemy attacks, 'we have considerably increased the assistance of the great rear to the great front', an unusually direct claim of North Vietnamese assistance to the South. Indeed, Dung went to great lengths to link the North with the South, describing the battles as inseparable; American air attacks on the North would end only when the United States had been defeated in the South, a position that has rarely been spelled out by the North Vietnamese. He reasoned that since the enemy has not 'resigned himself to being defeated in the South, he certainly has not yet renounced his plots and acts to destroy the North.' Like many North Vietnamese leaders, Dung believes that the war in the South governs the United States' actions in the North, and he opposes any tendency to divorce the two zones.

Like his compatriots, Dung regards American strategy in the air war over the North as further testimony to basic weaknesses in the American position. The United States had failed to achieve any of the objectives of its air campaign. The bombing had not shaken the determination of Hanoi's leaders; rather, Dung wrote, 'It is in the face of enemy bombs and bullets that our determination has been tested and forged and become more steadfast than ever before.' The movement of supplies south had not been interrupted by the bombing; in fact, Dung claimed, it had been stepped up, along with assistance from the rest of the Communist world. The morale of the South Vietnamese government, which the air campaign was supposed to bolster had not, in Dung's view, improved.

Maintaining that victory depended on an accurate understanding of the enemy's plans and capabilities, Dung discussed the United State's position in some detail. Each new escalation in the North, he said, brought him a certain degree of comfort, because it meant that the Communist revolution in the South had achieved new victories. The United States had become

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'politically isolated' because of the air war, and had been forced to limit its military actions and resort to deceptive political and diplomatic tricks.' He revealed that as early as mid-1964, the North Vietnamese suspected that the Viet Cong's victories in the South might precipitate American air attacks on the North, and they had then put part of their armed forces on 'a war footing' and strengthened their combat readiness. Dung may be referring here to a decision to seek military assistance, such as MIGs and missiles, from their allies. It seems logical for the decision to have been made at this time, since it was about then that Hanoi began to send regular North Vietnamese Army units south. Early in 1965, Dung said, it became obvious that the United States would soon carry out air attacks on the North on a regular basis. The stepped-up tempo of the war against the North he attributed to American failures in the South: 'The enemy's serious escalation steps since the end of February 1967, including the use of warships to bombard coastal areas, the use of planes to drop submerged mines into the rivers of the North, and the bombing of industrial enterprises and the populated areas of Hanoi and Haiphong, were closely related to the bitter setbacks suffered by more than a million United States and puppet troops on the South Vietnam battlefield in the 1966-67 dry season.' The North Vietnamese call this the 'law of the United States war of aggression.'

Dung conceded that the American arsenal was impressive, but claimed that political factors limited the effectiveness of American air supremacy. Although he did not explicitly state that the United States was inhibited in its air campaign by fear of the reaction of the Communist world to large-scale or strategic raids, he certainly implied as much when he said that 'the present balance of international forces' was one reason why the united States Air Force was obliged to 'escalate step-by-step.' Linking the air war with the ground war and the diplomatic arena, Dung summarized American strategic weaknesses as follows:

'They have escalated step-by-step while overcome with fear. They have struck at us while probing and exerting pressure on us. Their escalation steps have depended on the developments of the war in the South and on their diplomatic tricks. That is why they escalated, then de-escalated, and then escalated higher than before. Sometimes they have taken a risky step in order to probe the situation, and then de-escalated.'

In Dung's view this see-sawing combination of diplomatic and military moves made it impossible for the United States Air Force to 'develop its strength and strong points.' He pointed to the alleged complaints of American air commanders embittered over

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the lost opportunity for 'strategic bombing to play a decisive role.' As for the air tactics themselves, Dung believed that American equipment and tactics were 'not entirely consistent with the war conditions.' The targets were too numerous, of minor importance, and sometimes moving. The United States had to use 'nuclear-carrying aircraft to drop ordinary bombs, and up-to-date warplanes costing millions of dollars to hit such a target as a bamboo pontoon bridge.' He also repeated the optimistic view, echoed in many North Vietnamese publications, that the number of American aircraft is 'limited; aircraft losses have surpassed productive capacity...the number of bombs and shells is insufficient...professional pilots have gradually been lost and the shortage of United States pilots has become serious, and, most notably, the United States Navy has to use the pilots of the United States strategic defense forces.' It is interesting to note that the North Vietnamese impression of American air power has undergone a radical change since the beginning of the air campaign. North Vietnamese writings generally had held that the United States was applying the full weight of its military strength in North Vietnam. What brought about the realization that the United States was not exploiting the full resources of its air power is difficult to say; it may have been a close reading of the world press by the Vietnamese Communists, or consultation with their Soviet allies.

Perhaps the most important revelations in Dung's analysis of the air war were those which dealt with Hanoi's view of modern weaponry. On the surface, Dung's attitude can simply be written off as the traditionalist North Vietnamese view, but more fundamental issues seem to be involved. Essentially, the problems caused by efforts to assimilate modern MIGs and missiles underscore the lack of technical depth inherent in any largely agricultural society. The question of national ego is involved, too, and the dependence on foreign assistance, which runs counter to the traditionalist spirit, was on the one hand admitted as necessary, but on the other played down as if it were of secondary importance. Dung blamed the failures of MIGs and missiles not on Vietnamese technical shortcomings, but on the equipment itself and Soviet tactical doctrine. He asserted that the traditional Vietnamese strategy of 'people's war' formed the basis of Hanoi's response to American air attacks, and the key to the alleged success of this response was the individual soldier manning conventional anti-aircraft artillery, the machine gun, and the rifle.

The conflict alive today in the minds of many North Vietnamese leaders is not dissimilar to that which plagued the nineteenth-century Chinese gentry when confronted with the Western world.

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Essentially, it revolves around the blending of 'essence and utility,' a Chinese precept that called for the preservation of the 'essence' of the Confucian way while at the same time utilizing selected facets of the Western way. For the North Vietnamese this means preserving the 'essence' of the principles of 'people's war,' while making selective use of MIGs and missiles, alien inventions that bring with them alien military tactics. Dung described the dilemna as 'relying mainly on one's strength, and at the same time striving to struggle for international assistance.' International assistance was very important, but 'no matter how great it may be,' what made it effective was the way it was used by the North Vietnamese. It was 'our party and our people themselves,' he emphasized, 'who had solved all the problems relating to the lines, policies, aims, strategy, and tactics of our people's war in a correct and creative way.' He maintained that the party's 'creative application' of the principles of people's war in the new circumstances not only had marked an advance in the theory of people's war, but also had 'brought some sharp changes in the current military theory of many developed countries of the world today—especially theory relating to the role of an air force and missiles, and the various means and methods to be used against modern weapons and techniques.'

The terms in which Dung discussed MIG and missile tactics suggest differences of opinion between the Vietnamese and the Soviets who provided the equipment. He described Vietnamese tactics as 'wise and vivid, not mechanical and unoriginal.' The technical branches of the North Vietnamese Army, the air force, and missile units, he claimed, had developed 'original Vietnamese combat methods,' which were not 'dogmatic and imitative.' Vietnamese tactics were a 'combination of two main tactical forms: namely, manning battle positions and protecting the objectives, and moving our forces to hit the enemy.' This passage presumably refers to the use of surface-to-air missiles in point defense and mobile defense. A point defense calls for massing missile launching sites around a given point in numbers sufficient to render penetration very costly. A mobile defense calls for moving the equipment frequently, so that the enemy is constantly on guard and never certain when or where missiles will be encountered. The Soviets may have felt that, given the lack of maneuvering room in the North Vietnamese terrain—the heart of the country is nestled in the Red River Delta—a point defense of vital targets made the most sense. The roads, constantly subjected to armed reconnaissance, are probably not in good enough condition to allow the easy movement of large missiles, launchers, and radar vans. Nor are the open fields of North Vietnam, being heavily dotted with rice paddies, easily traversed. Dung asserted, however, that the Vietnamese had chosen to rely on a mobile defense:

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'The active and resolute moving of forces to hit the enemy is a striking proof of our understanding of the concept of active air defense combat, which allows us to become increasingly active, concentrate our forces in time in a determined direction and period, and launch a surprise attack on the enemy. This also allows our air defense firepower network to change constantly, and the anti-aircraft net of fire [words indistinct] to fight the enemy everywhere.'

While such tactics are theoretically sound, Dung's claims have to be compared to actual performance. Defense Secretary McNamara told Congress on January 25, 1967, that 'as of 24 January, there were about 1,570 surface-to-air missiles fired at U.S. aircraft, and U.S. losses to these missiles numbered forty-three.' This means that the North Vietnamese were firing about 36 missiles for every American aircraft downed. Reason credits the Soviet Union with producing a defense system which, if operated according to design specifications, would perform far better than that.

Dung stated that although 'reality has shown that we must and can, to a limited extent, equip our people's armed forces with modern weapons and means, such as jet aircraft and missiles,' 'jet aircraft and missiles are not omnipotent,' or suitable for all occasions. This remark may imply that others in the North Vietnamese military hierarchy disagreed with him, and that neither missiles nor MIGs lived up to the original expectations of some North Vietnamese military men, probably air force officers. Dung may have been in the minority opposing the decision to seek outside assistance. He acknowledged the continuing lack of skilled Vietnamese technicians, two years after the introduction of modern Soviet weapons, in remarking that 'we must study and grasp some scientific and technical knowledge to be able to properly use the new weapons and methods.' His use of the present tense implies that the future performance of the new weapons will be affected by the response to his call.

Returning to his favorite theme, Dung described the use of MIGs and missiles as just one facet of the North Vietnamese air-defense effort. Everyone in North Vietnam was part of the air-defense system. The engineer corps, the transportation corps, infantry units, and militia forces, he said, were all organized and trained in air defense. He called for 'close cooperation' among all these forces, and pointed to anti-aircraft artillery units as 'the core' of the defense system—rightly, since the majority of American air losses have been to conventional ground fire. He emphasized again and again that the 'basic problem' which would determine the success or failure of the air-defense effort, was that of evolving a suitable blend of tactics and doctrine, a blend that would incorporate the necessary mastery of modern weapons

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with adherence to the basic principles of people's war. This is a large order; it may never be filled." *(Patrick J. McGarvey, Visions of Victory (Stanford: Stanford University, 1969), pp. 25-31; Text in Ibid., pp. 150-67.)*

25 June-- Reporting to the American people about his discussions with Soviet Premier Aleksei N. Kosygin at Glassboro, New Jersey, on 23 and 25 June, President Johnson refers to Vietnam: "On Viet Nam, the area of agreement is smaller. It is defined by the fact that the dangers and the difficulties of any one area must never be allowed to become a cause of wider conflict. Yet even in Viet-Nam, I was able to make it very clear, with no third party between us, that we will match and we will outmatch every step to peace that others may be ready to take." *(Department of State Bulletin, vol 57, p. 37.)*

25 June-- In a statement to newsmen, Premier Kosygin declares: "The exchange of views [with President Johnson at the Glassboro summit conference] once again revealed profound differences in the positions of the Soviet Union and the United States. It was emphasized on the Soviet side that settlement of the Viet-Nam problem is possible only on the condition of an end to the bombing of the territory of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam and the withdrawal of American forces from South Viet-Nam." *(Department of State Bulletin, vol 57, p. 38.)*

25 June-- The New China news agency denounces the meetings of Premier Kosygin and President Johnson at Glassboro. The Chinese claim that the purpose of the summit talks is to establish "a global American-Soviet deal intended to enhance the anti-China, anti-Communist, anti-people and counter-revolutionary Washington-Moscow alliance." The news agency concludes that the meetings are "first and foremost directed against the Chinese." *(CQ Background, China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1967 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 220j.)*

July-- The Soviet-oriented World Marxist Review, in the course of a survey of recent US escalation of the war in Vietnam, notes that "[o]n June 2 in the Port of Campha, U.S. aircraft attacked the Soviet merchant vessel 'Turkestan'. This violation of international law, an act of banditry, shows that the Pentagon is seeking to cut off the DRV from the rest of the world and at the same time inflame the international tension, regardless of the likely grave consequences. The Soviet government strongly protested to the U.S. government, holding it responsible for this provocation. The Soviet Union, despite the reckless U.S. banditry, will continue to render all necessary aid and deliver whatever cargoes the DRV needs in its just war against aggression."

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(D. Pospelov, "Escalation Continues", World Marxist Review, X, no. 7 (July, 1967), pp. 15-16.)

1 July-- Secretary Rusk replies to questions by a Swedish newsman, who is interested in the National Liberation Front. Rusk denies that the NLF holds positions independent from those of North Vietnam. He says: "Neither the history of the origin of the NLF nor intelligence based on Communist statements, NLF documents, and prisoner interrogations supports this view. A concerted effort has of course been made, particularly abroad, by Hanoi to create the illusion that the NLF is an independent organization, but this does not convince many South Vietnamese--nor many knowledgeable foreign observers, for that matter. If you will examine with care Hanoi's programs and those issued by the NLF, you will agree, I am sure, that there is no substantial difference in what they are proposing to do to South Viet-Nam. Tactics on occasion demand differences in emphasis, particularly for foreign consumption. But Hanoi's control of the NLF has been amply demonstrated over the years. Were this not so, the NLF has had many chances to demonstrate it and has not done so." Rusk also notes: "The NLF does not say that it represents a part of the people of South Viet-Nam but rather that it is the sole legitimate representative of all these people...Obviously, we cannot 'recognize' the NLF on their terms." *(Department of State Bulletin, vol 57, pp. 91-94.)*

2 July-- Vienna Volksstimme publishes an interview with DRV Foreign Minister and Deputy Premier Nguyen Duy Trinh, who once again reiterates: "If the United States unconditionally discontinues all bombing raids and all other acts of war against the DRV, then there can be negotiations between the DRV and the United States." He believes, however, that "it is obvious that the United States does not want peace. It is intensifying the war in both zones and now it is even going as far as to bomb Hanoi. The Vietnamese people will never yield to force. They will never conduct talks with the aggressors under the pressure of force..." *(Joint US Public Affairs Office, Vietnam: Documents and Research Notes, no. 8 (Saigon: JUSPAO, 1967), p. 10.)*

12 July-- Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and others who have returned from a fact-finding trip to South Vietnam confer with President Johnson. Afterwards Secretary McNamara meets with the press. He reports that US military commanders feel that the "actions that General Westmoreland had organized and carried on over the past several months, particularly in II and III Corps, had a spoiling effect on the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese. Before they could concentrate their troops to launch an offensive, Westmoreland, through his intelligence sources, had obtained information about the intended enemy plans and had struck the

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troop concentrations as they were developing, spoiling the potential of the enemy for carrying out these offensive actions." He says further: "Moreover, as you know, it has been General Westmoreland's strategy over the past several months to attack the base areas, particularly those in the II and III Corps, using B-52 strikes in some cases, but in particular using a coordinated ground and air attack against these base areas to destroy the facilities, the stocks--the recuperation areas that the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese had used...The military commanders felt, as a result of this combination of spoiling attacks and attacks on the base areas, the pressure had been so great on the Viet Cong that they had tended to shift their area of activity. Whereas up until very recently, the activity had been concentrated primarily in the II and III Corps, the offensive activities more recently--they had moved their area of action to the I Corps...This is understandable because in the II and III Corps--with the loss of their base areas--they were at the end of a very long line of communication over which their men and supplies moved in from the supply centers in North Viet-Nam. This line of communications moved down the panhandle of North Viet-Nam across into Laos, down Laos to the Cambodian border, and across into South Viet-Nam--a very, very long line of communication that was under very intense air attack, as a matter of fact." Secretary McNamara also points to successes in opening roads and highways to travel in South Vietnam, and he says that he was pleased with what he saw of the pacification program. He also tells the press that more US troops will have to be sent to Vietnam. *(Department of State Bulletin, vol 57, pp. 167-70.)*

23 July-- A broadcast by Peking International Service reports a People's Daily "Commentator" article entitled "Sinister Policy of US-Soviet Collaboration". It notes: "Of late the Johnson administration has been planning to send more troop reinforcements to South Viet-Nam and to extend the bombing of North Viet-Nam, including the Red River dam. It has sent B-52's to bomb the demilitarized zone. At the same time, Rusk has come out with the proposal aimed at inducing 'peace talks through a bombing pause,' clamouring that 'the problem of our stopping the bombing is not a serious one' so long as the Vietnamese people agree to a 'de-escalation.' This is sheer deception... This latest scheme is one to gain a respite by tying the hands of the Vietnamese people and to achieve its aim of permanently occupying South Viet-Nam by trapping the Vietnamese people into holding 'peace talks'...There is no question of 'de-escalation' in Viet-Nam today. Since US imperialism has sent hundreds of thousands of troops to commit aggression in Viet-Nam, the Vietnamese people are justified to strike relentlessly at the US aggressors. Whether or not there will be more troop reinforcements and bombing, so long as the aggressors do not quit from the soil

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of Viet-Nam lock, stock and barrel, the heroic and militant Vietnamese people will carry on their war against US aggression and for national salvation and will never consent to any 'de-escalation.'" Peking repeats its contention that the Geneva Accords have been "torn to shreds by US imperialism." Dean Rusk's attempt to induce "'peace talks through a bombing pause' is the product of Soviet-US collaboration and the Glassboro talks...According to the Western press, Kosygin, during the talks, urgently asked Johnson to issue orders for a pause in the US bombing of North Viet-Nam while Johnson urged Kosygin to make another effort to induce Hanoi to make a 'mutual de-escalation' in the Viet-Nam war." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 13 (Canberra: GPO, 1968), pp. 6-7.)*

29 July-- The VC Radio Liberation comments on the intensive US/RVN preparations for the forthcoming South Vietnamese national elections. It says: "The holding of so-called elections for the President, Vice-President, Senate, and House of Representatives is merely a deceitful political trick of the US imperialists and their lackeys aimed at applying a layer of legal and democratic veneer to the extremely rotten puppet administration, at coping with an increasingly isolated, despised, and condemned situation at home and in the world, at strengthening the reactionaries' power, and at serving the US imperialists' policy of continuing to intensify and prolong the war of aggression in order to massacre our compatriots and destroy our country." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 13 (Canberra: GPO, 1968), pp. 8-9.)*

7 August-- Chief of State Norodom Sihanouk accuses the Cambodian Communists of waging a relentless campaign to undermine his authority and turn the nation into a Chinese satellite. *(New York Times, 8 August 1967, p. 3.)*

16 August-- General Earle G. Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, testifies before the Senate Preparedness Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee that the major port areas of North Vietnam are prohibited to air attack, and adds: "Pertinent to this current restriction is the fact that on... two occasions, our air strikes on targets near the harbor areas have accidentally damaged Soviet shipping." *(90th Cong 1st Sess, Air War Against North Vietnam, Hearings before the Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate (Washington: GPO, 1967), pt 2, p. 126.)*

24 August-- The Soviet news agency Tass issues a statement: "On August 22 US air force planes made a new barbaric raid on the

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capital of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam. Bombs were dropped on densely populated residential districts. This was the fourth bandit-like air attack on the capital of the DRV in recent days. Simultaneously US aircraft and warships intensified the bombing and shelling of populated localities in other regions of North Viet-Nam...The American imperialists are also extending armed intervention in the south of Viet-Nam, with fresh contingents of American troops being sent there. The USA is making efforts to draw its allies and satellites still deeper into the criminal war...The danger of this short-sighted line pursued by Washington... lies in the fact that it is aggravating still more the international situation and can bring the world to a dangerous brink... Soviet people are wrathfully condemning the United States aggression against the Vietnamese people...Soviet leading circles are drawing appropriate conclusions in connection with the new criminal actions by the American imperialists against the DRV, against the Vietnamese people. Every new step taken by the USA on the road of the escalation of the war in Viet-Nam inevitably entails the necessary retaliatory steps." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 13 (Canberra: GPO, 1968), p. 33.)*

29 August-- Peking's Jenmin Jih Pao commemorates the "momentous statement" issued by Chairman Mao four years ago this day, which pointed out that the "oppressed peoples and nations must not pin their hopes for liberation on the 'sensibleness' of imperialism and its lackeys. They will only triumph by strengthening their unity and persevering in their struggle. This is what the people of southern Vietnam are doing." The editorial notes the "excellent revolutionary situation" in South Vietnam and vows that the Chinese people will make the "greatest national sacrifice" to support the Vietnamese people's just struggle: "...the heroic Vietnamese people's firm will to resist U.S. aggression and save their country is unshakable. They will never lay down their arms. They have vowed that they will fight on, fight to the bitter end, fight till their sacred territory is completely cleared of the U.S. aggressor-bandits." *("A Powerful Weapon for the Revolutionary People in Defeating U.S. Imperialism and Its Lackeys", Peking Review, X, no. 37 (8 September 1967), pp. 6-7.)*

30 August-- Peking radio broadcasts the text of a Foreign Ministry statement which notes that "[o]f late,...US air pirates have successively carried out largescale bombings of the city of Hanoi, capital of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and attacked communication lines in northern Viet-Nam and the Red River embankment, and bombers were dispatched to bomb areas north of the demilitarised zone. In particular, the wanton and indiscriminate bombing of the city and suburban areas of Hanoi by US planes since 21 August has caused heavy losses of life

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and property to the Vietnamese people. Against this, the Chinese Government and people express boundless indignation and strong condemnation...The recent intensified bombing of northern Viet-Nam by US imperialism indicates not its strength but its weakness, showing that it is in unprecedented isolation and at the end of its tether in the war of aggression against Viet-Nam. Under the blows of the victorious resistance of the Vietnamese people, the second 'dry-season offensive' of US imperialism has ended up in a dismal defeat. Hence, US imperialism has to resort to reinforcements in an attempt to save itself from defeat. But the more the reinforcements, the heavier its defeat." Moreover: "'Forcing peace talks through bombing' is a shopworn trick of US imperialism. Each time it expands the war, a new 'peace talks' scheme invariably follows. On 7 August Johnson personally approved the massive bombing of 'new targets' in northern Viet-Nam; on 11 August US planes began uninterrupted bombing raids against Hanoi, Lang Son, and other places; and on 18 August Johnson hurriedly held a press conference and declared that if the Vietnamese side 'agrees to a cease-fire' and 'negotiations', the United States can effect a 'bombing pause'." Finally, the Foreign Ministry notes: "While embarking on war adventure in Viet-Nam, the US aggressors have brazenly sent aircraft to intrude into China's airspace over Kwangsi for provocations. An Air Force unit of the Chinese PLA has completely wiped out the intruding US aircraft, dealing a heavy blow to US imperialism. The flagrant war provocation by US imperialism against the Chinese people shows more clearly than ever that the US war of aggression in Viet-Nam is directed not only against the Vietnamese people but also against the Chinese people...Should the US imperialists invade us, we will wipe them out resolutely, thoroughly, wholly, and completely." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 13 (Canberra: GPO, 1968), pp. 38-39.)*

31 August-- In a National Day speech, Pham Van Dong reiterates his Government's 4-point stand. He charges that "[o]n its part the U.S. Government has so far completely failed to propose any solution to the Viet-Nam problem. All it has done is to quibble and resort to hypocritical talk, putting forward now 14 and now 7 points, with the sole purpose of camouflaging its aggressive design of clinging to South Viet-Nam at all costs and prolonging the partition of our country...We know quite well that the United States does not want to negotiate a settlement of the Viet-Nam problem because imperialism is aggressive and warlike by nature...To make it possible for everybody and for world opinion to see clearly through the U.S. peace negotiation hoax, and at the same time, to show our good will, our Foreign Minister issued his statement of 28 January 1967...If the American side really wants to talk, it must first of all stop unconditionally the bombing and all other acts of war against

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the DRV...The United States has no right to demand any reciprocity whatsoever. Yet it is asking for mutual deescalation, and to back this piratical claim, each time it clamors about peace negotiations, it steps up its aggressive war in the South and its escalation against the North. By so doing, the U.S. ruling circles hope, through bombing, and under their conditions, to force us to the conference table...So long as the United States pursues its aggression, we will continue to fight." *(Joint US Public Affairs Office, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 13 (Canberra: GPO, 1967), p. 11.)*

31 August-- An extraordinary Congress of the National Liberation Front issues the first comprehensive NLF political program since 20 December 1960. Excerpts are as follows:

"1. Unite the Entire People, Fight the US Aggressors, Save the Country

(a) During 4,000 years of their history, the Vietnamese people have united and fought against foreign invasion to preserve their independence and freedom...

The independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of Viet-Nam were formally recognised by the 1954 Geneva conference. Since then, our compatriots in South Viet-Nam together with the people all over the country, should have been living in peace and building a free and happy life. However, the US imperialists have sabotaged the Geneva agreements, ousted the French colonialists, set up in South Viet-Nam an extremely cruel puppet regime, and tried to turn the southern part of Viet-Nam into a neocolony and a military base in an attempt to prolong the partition of our country, conquer the whole of Viet-Nam, and impose their domination throughout Indo-China and South-East Asia...

Over the past few years, the US imperialists have continually escalated the war, yet they have unceasingly clamoured about peace negotiations in an attempt to fool the American and world people.

The Saigon puppet administration has sold out South Viet-Nam to the US imperialists. It has oppressed and exploited our southern compatriots in an extremely ruthless way. It has forced South Viet-Nam youth into the army to serve the United States in massacring our fellow countrymen. In a demagogic bid, it has also staged the farce of working out a constitution and holding elections. It is only a clique of traitors, an instrument for the US imperialists to enslave the South Vietnamese people, prolong the partition of our country and further the US war of aggression.

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(b) The US aggressors and their lackeys think they can intimidate our people by the use of force and deceive them by means of tricks. But they are grossly mistaken...

(c) The most dangerous enemies of our people at present are the US imperialist aggressors and their lackeys—the traitorous puppet administration.

The tasks and objectives of the South Vietnamese people in the struggle for national salvation are now as follows: To unite the entire people, resolutely defeat the US imperialist's war of aggression, overthrow their lackey puppet administration, establish a broad national union and democratic administration and build an independent, peaceful, neutral, and prosperous South Viet-Nam, and proceed toward the peaceful reunification of the fatherland.

The force that guarantees the fulfilment of the above task of fighting against US aggression and saving the country is our great national union. The NFLSV constantly stands for uniting all social strata and classes, all nationalities, all political parties, all organisations, all religious communities, all patriotic personalities, all individuals, and all patriotic and progressive forces, irrespective of political tendencies, in order to struggle together, against the US imperialists and their lackeys, wrest back our sacred national rights, and build up the country.

The NLF is prepared to invite and welcome all patriotic forces and individuals who oppose the US aggressors to join its ranks, and to shoulder together the common duties. It proposes that any force which, for one reason or another, does not adhere to its ranks, take joint action against the common enemy—the US aggressors and their lackeys...

While fighting for their sacred national rights, the people of South Viet-Nam actively accomplish their internationalist duty. Their resistance war against US aggression is an integral part of the revolutionary struggle of the people all over the world.

The NLF undertakes to stand within the united bloc of the Indo-Chinese peoples to fight against the US imperialists and their lackeys, to defend to fight against the US imperialists and their lackeys, to defend the independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of Viet-Nam, Cambodia, and Laos.

The NLF pledges to take an active part in the common struggle of the world's people against the bellicose and aggressive imperialists headed by US imperialism, for peace, national independence, democracy, and social progress.

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(d) The cruel US aggressors are trampling upon our homeland. We, the people of South Viet-Nam, must stand up to make revolution and wage a people's war with a view to annihilating them, driving them out of our borders, and wresting back national independence and sovereignty...

The enemy of our nation is ruthless and obdurate. But our entire people are determined to fight and to defeat the US aggressors and their lackeys. So long as the US imperialists do not end their war of aggression, withdraw all US and satellite troops from our country, and let the South Vietnamese people settle themselves the internal affairs of South Viet-Nam without foreign intervention, our people will resolutely fight on until total victory. The South Vietnamese people's liberation war is a long and hard one, but it is sure to end in victory...

...The NLF undertakes to develop the Liberation Armed Forces comprising the main force units, the regional troops, and the militia and guerilla units, with the aim of promoting people's war, combining guerilla with regular warfare, wiping out as many live enemy forces as possible, crushing the enemy's will for aggression, and winning the final victory.

The Front undertakes to build and develop the political forces of the masses, promote the movement of political struggle, and combine armed struggle with political struggle and agitation among enemy troops, thus forming three converging prongs to defeat the enemy...

...At the same time, the Front undertakes to encourage all strata of people in the liberated areas to unite closely, to build the people's self-management system, to achieve step-by-step a local national democratic administration, to build base areas, to strive to produce and fight against US aggression and for national salvation to proceed with a good settlement of the agrarian question; to build the new economy and culture of the liberated areas, to foster the people's forces with a view to insuring supplies for the frontline and carrying the resistance war through to complete victory.

2. Build an Independent, Democratic, Peaceful, Neutral and Prosperous South Viet-Nam

The people of South Viet-Nam are determined to defeat the US aggressors and their lackeys, and to devote their might and main to build a political system that guarantees the independence and sovereignty of the nation and the freedom and happiness of the people, to heal the wounds of war, to liquidate the social evils left over by the US puppet regime, to restore moral life

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and build an independent, democratic, peaceful, neutral, and prosperous South Viet-Nam.

To achieve these objectives, the NLF lays down the following concrete policies:

(a) To achieve a broad and progressive democratic regime:

To abolish the disguised colonial regime established by the US imperialists in South Viet-Nam, to overthrow the puppet administration, hireling of the United States, not to recognise the puppet national assembly rigged up by the US imperialists and their lackeys, to abolish the constitution and all anti-national and anti-democratic laws enacted by the US imperialists and the puppet administration.

To hold free general elections, to elect the national assembly in a really democratic way in accordance with the principle of universal, equal, direct suffrage and secret ballot. This national assembly will be the state body with the highest authority in South Viet-Nam. It will work out a democratic constitution which fully embodies the most fundamental and most eager aspirations of all social strata in South Viet-Nam and guarantee the establishment of a broad, progressive, democratic state structure. To guarantee the immunity of the deputies to the national assembly.

To set up a national union democratic government including the most representative persons among the various social strata, nationalities, religious communities, patriotic and democratic parties, patriotic personalities, and forces which have contributed to the cause of national liberation.

To proclaim and enforce broad democratic freedoms—freedom of speech, freedom of the press and publication, freedom of assembly, trade union freedom, freedom of association, freedom to form political parties, freedom of creed, freedom to demonstrate.

To guarantee to all citizens inviolability of the human person, freedom of residence and lodging, secrecy of correspondence, freedom of movement, freedom to work and rest, and the right to study.

To enforce equality between man and woman and equality among the various nationalities.

To set free all persons detained by the US imperialists and the puppet administration on account of their patriotic activities.

To dissolve the concentration camps set up in all forms by the US imperialists and their lackeys.

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All those people who have had to seek asylum abroad because of the US and puppet regime, have the right to return to the country to serve the fatherland.

To severely punish the diehard cruel agents of the US imperialists.

(b) To build an independent and self-supporting economy, to improve the people's living conditions:

To abolish the policy of economic enslavement and monopoly of the US imperialists. To confiscate the property of the US imperialists and their diehard cruel agents and turn it into state property. To build an independent and self-supporting economy. To rapidly heal the wounds of war, to restore and develop the economy so as to make the people rich and the country powerful. To protect the right to ownership of the means of production and other property of the citizens under the laws of the state...

(c) To enact the land policy:

To carry out the slogan 'Land to the Tiller'. To confiscate the lands of the US imperialists and the diehard cruel landlords—their lackeys. To allot those lands to landless or land-poor peasants. To confirm and protect the ownership of the lands allotted to peasants by the revolution.

The state will negotiate the purchase of land from landlords who possess land upward of a certain amount, varying with the situation in each locality. It will allot these lands to landless or land-poor peasants. The recipients will receive the lands free of charge and will not be bound by any condition whatsoever. In areas where the required conditions for land reform do not yet obtain, land-rent reduction will be carried out.

To entrust the lands belonging to absentee landlords to peasants for cultivation and enjoyment of the produce. Adequate steps will be taken on this subject at a later stage in consideration of the political attitude of each landlord. To allow landlords to offer land to the Liberation Peasants Association; the state will allot these lands to landless or land-poor peasants. To encourage the owners of industrial crops or fruit-tree plantations to keep their farms going. To respect the legitimate right to ownership of land by the churches, pagodas, and holy sees of religious sects. To carry out a fair and rational redistribution of communal lands. To guarantee the legitimate right to ownership of reclaimed lands to those who reclaim them...

(d) To build a national democratic culture and education:

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To develop science and technology, to promote public health. To fight against the American-type enslaving and depraved culture and education now adversely affecting our people's fine, long-standing cultural traditions. To build a national democratic culture and education, to develop science and technology in service of national construction and defence. To educate the people in the Vietnamese nation's tradition of struggle against foreign invasion and its heroic history. To preserve and develop the fine culture and good customs and habits of our nation...

(e) To guarantee the rights and cater to the livelihood of workers, labourers, and civil servants:

To promulgate labour legislation. To put into practice the eight-hour working day. To provide for a regime of rest and recreation. To set up a rational system of wages and bonuses for increased productivity. To improve the living and working conditions of the workers, labourers, and civil servants. To apply a policy of adequate remuneration for apprentices. To provide jobs to the workers and the poor people in the towns. To make every effort to do away with unemployment. To put into practice a policy on social security to care for and assist workers, labourers, and civil servants in case of disease, incapacitation, old age, or retirement. To improve living conditions in working people's residential quarters...

(f) To build up strong South Viet-Nam Liberation Armed Forces with a view to liberating the people and defending the fatherland:

The South Viet-Nam Liberation Armed Forces—comprising the main force units, the regional troops, and the militia and guerillas—are the children of the people, and are boundlessly loyal to the interests of the fatherland and the people, and are duty-bound to fight shoulder to shoulder with the entire people to liberate the south, defend the fatherland, and make an active contribution to the defence of peace in Asia and in the world. To pay due attention to the building of the Liberation Armed Forces. To strive to raise their quality and increase their fighting capacity with a view to stepping up peoples war, defeating the US satellite, and puppet troops, and bringing the fight against US aggression for national salvation to total victory. To strengthen the political work with a view to enhancing the patriotism and determination to fight and to win of the Liberation Armed Forces, enhancing the sense of discipline, and continuously tightening the 'fish and water' relations between the army and the population.

(g) To show gratitude to the martyrs:

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To cater for disabled armymen, to reward the fighters and compatriots who have an outstanding record in the fight against US aggression and for national salvation...

(h) To organise social relief:

To give relief to the compatriots—victims of the war of aggression unleased by the US imperialists and the puppet regime...

(i) To put into practice equality between man and woman:

To protect mothers and children. To pay utmost attention to raising the political, cultural, and vocational standards of women in a manner fitting with their merits in the struggle against US aggression and for national salvation...

(j) To strengthen unity:

To practice equality and mutual assistance among nationalities. To abolish all systems and policies applied by the imperialists and their lackeys with a view to dividing, oppressing, and exploiting the various nationalities. To oppose discrimination among and forcible assimilation to the nationalities. To develop the long-standing tradition of unity and mutual assistance among the various fraternal nationalities with a view to defending and building the country. All nationalities are equal in rights and obligations...

(k) To respect freedom of creed:

To achieve unity and equality among the different religious communities. To fight against all manoeuvres and tricks of the imperialists and their lackeys who use a number of persons under the cloak of religion to oppose our people's struggle against US aggression and for national salvation, to sow dissension between believers and non-believers and among different religious communities, and to harm the country, the people, and the religion. To respect freedom of creed and worship. To preserve pagodas, churches, holy sees, temples. All religions are equal and none is to be discriminated against. To achieve unity among believers of various religions and between believers and the entire nation for the sake of the struggle against US aggression and their lackeys to defend and build the country.

(l) Welcome puppet officers and men and puppet officials back to the just cause:

To show leniency, and give a humane treatment to rallied armymen and prisoners-of-war. To oppose the US imperialists and

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the puppet administration's attempts to press gang mercenaries to serve the US aggressors against the fatherland and massacre the people. To severely punish the diehard thugs acting as efficient agents of the US imperialists. To afford conditions for puppet officers and puppet officials to come back to the just cause and join the people's fight against US aggression to save and build country.

Those individuals, groups, or units of the puppet army and administration who render services to the cause of fighting against US aggression for national salvation will be rewarded and entrusted with responsible jobs. Those who sympathise with and support the struggle against US aggression for national salvation or those who refuse to carry out orders of the United States and puppets to harm the people will have their merits recorded.

Those individuals, groups, or units who have broken away from the puppet army and voluntarily apply to join the Liberation Armed Forces for fighting against the United States to save the country are welcomed and enjoy equal treatment. Regarding those individuals or units who have broken away from the puppet army and administration and risen against the US aggressors to save the country, the Front stands ready to join actions with them in the fight against the US aggressors on a basis of equality, mutual respect, and assistance so as together to protect the people and liberate the fatherland.

Those functionaries of the puppet administration who volunteered to serve the country and the people in the state machine after the liberation of South Viet-Nam will enjoy equal treatment. Those in the puppet army and the puppet administration at any level who have committed crimes against the people but are now sincerely repentant will be pardoned. Those who redeem their crimes by meritorious deeds will be rewarded accordingly. Captured officers and men of the puppet army will enjoy humanitarian treatment and clemency.

Those in the US Army and its satellite armies who cross over to the people's side will be given kind treatment and helped to return to their families when conditions permit. Captured US and satellite troops will be treated as captured puppet troops.

(m) To protect the rights and interests of overseas Vietnamese:

To welcome the patriotism of overseas Vietnamese and highly value all their contributions to the resistance to US aggression for national salvation of the people. To protect the rights and interests of overseas Vietnamese. To help those overseas Vietnamese who wish to return to take part in the building of the country.

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(n) To protect the legitimate rights and interests of foreign residents in South Viet-Nam:

To welcome those foreign residents who have contributed to the Vietnamese people's resistance to US aggression for national salvation...

3. To Restore Normal Relations Between North and South Viet-Nam, Proceed Toward Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland:

Viet-Nam is one. The Vietnamese people are one. No force can divide our fatherland. Reunification of the country is the sacred aspiration of our entire people. Viet-Nam must be reunified.

The policy of the NLF consists of the following:

(a) The reunification of Viet-Nam will be realised step by step and through peaceful means on the principle of negotiation between the two zones without either side using pressure against the other and without foreign interference.

(b) Pending the reunification of the country, the people in both zones will make joint efforts to oppose foreign invasion and defend the fatherland and at the same time endeavour to expand economic and cultural exchanges. The people in both zones are free to exchange letters, to go from one zone to another, and to choose their place of residence.

4. To Apply a Foreign Policy of Peace and Neutrality:

The NLF applies a foreign policy of peace and neutrality, a foreign policy which guarantees the independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of the country and helps safeguard world peace. In more concrete terms this policy consists of the following points:

(a) To establish diplomatic relations with all countries regardless of their social and political system on the principle of mutual respect for each other's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity, without infringement upon each other, without interference into each other's internal affairs, territory, equality, mutual benefits, and peaceful co-existence. To abolish all unequal treaties which the puppet administration has signed with the United States or any other country. To respect the economic and cultural interests of those countries which sympathise with, support, or assist the struggle against US aggression for national salvation of the Vietnamese people.

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To accept technical and economic assistance from any country without political conditions attached. To join no military alliance, to accept no military personnel, or military bases of foreign countries on South Viet-Nam territory.

(b) To strengthen friendly relations with all countries which sympathise with, support, or assist the struggle against US aggression for national salvation of the Vietnamese people. To strengthen relations of good neighbourhood with Cambodia and Laos. To unceasingly consolidate solidarity and mutual assistance between the peoples of the Indo-Chinese countries with a view to defending their respective independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity against the aggressive and war-provocation policy of the US imperialists and their henchmen.

(c) Actively support the national liberation movement of the peoples in Asia, Africa, and Latin America against imperialism and old and new colonialism. Actively support the struggle of the American people against the US imperialists' war of aggression in Viet-Nam. Actively support the struggle for peace, democracy, and social progress in all countries in the world.

(d) Actively struggle to contribute to the safeguarding of world peace, oppose the bellicose and aggressive imperialists headed by US imperialism. Demand the dissolution of the aggressive military blocs and foreign military bases of imperialism. Unceasingly consolidate and develop relations with international democratic organisations and the peoples of all countries including the American people. Actively contribute to the consolidation and development of the world people's front in support of Viet-Nam against the US imperialist aggressors, for national independence, and peace...

The NLF warmly welcomes all political parties, mass organisations, and patriotic and progressive personalities who broadly rally within and outside the front in order to defeat together the US aggressors and their henchmen.

The struggle against US aggression, for national salvation of our people is a just cause...

In the supreme interests of the fatherland, let our entire people in South Viet-Nam strengthen their solidarity, millions as one, and rush forward shoulder to shoulder in the impetus of our victories to completely defeat the US aggressors and their stooge administration, and together with our northern compatriots to fulfill the great and glorious cause of liberating the south, defending the north, and proceeding toward the peaceful reunification of the fatherland." *(Department of External Affairs,*

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Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 13 (Canberra: GPO, 1968), pp. 44-52.)

6-21 September-- On 6 September, Ho Chi Minh sends a message to NLF President Nguyen Huu Tho warmly acclaiming the Front's new political programme. Peking publishes similar support in Jenmin Jih Pao. In a 21 September editorial, the Chinese state that the situation in South Vietnam is "excellent" for the revolutionary forces and is getting better all the time. They claim: "Carrying the war of resistance against U.S. aggression and for national salvation through to the end is the most important political task of the Vietnamese people at the present stage...Only by completely defeating U.S. imperialist aggression and driving out every single U.S. aggressor and all their accomplices can the Vietnamese people win complete liberation, achieve the reunification of their fatherland and build a prosperous and strong country. It is the sacred historic mission of the 31 million Vietnamese people to strive for complete victory in the war to resist U.S. aggression and save the country, a central task which is more important for the entire Vietnamese people at present than anything else." As usual, no specific commitments are made, only the pledge that the Chinese people "are determined to make the maximum national sacrifice in their all-out support for the Vietnamese people's war to resist U.S. aggression and to save their country. The 700 million Chinese people, armed with the great thought of Mao Tse-tung, have vowed to give their solid backing to the Vietnamese people and will resolutely support them to fight on until final victory." *("South Vietnamese People's Militant Programme for United Fight Against U.S. Imperialism", Peking Review, X, no. 40 (29 September 1967), pp. 18-19.)*

10 September-- Secretary of State Rusk discusses the American bombing campaign against North Vietnam. He says: "I don't myself quite see what Hanoi's incentive for peace would be, if they were sitting there completely safe, undisturbed, able to send men and arms into South Viet-Nam at their pace for the next 30 or 40 years. Now the concentration on the bombing, and the international campaign which they and other Communist capitals have organized to get the bombing stopped, indicates that the bombing is a very important element in this situation. We hear much more about the bombing than we do about four points and five points and all the paraphernalia of political discussion. Now this, therefore, is important to them." He also offers an evaluation of the impact of bombing on Communist infiltration: "I think it has had a considerable effect on lines of communication, the capacity of the north to maintain a war at certain magnitudes...If all those people [in North Vietnam who are there to repair railways and repair bridges and things of that sort]

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were free to bring arms piggyback to support men in South Viet-Nam, the situation would be quite different. So that there is no doubt at all that the bombing has had some real effect on their capacity to sustain a particular level of operations in the South." Moreover, he notes: "In a broadcast just yesterday from Hanoi, they announced that we had killed 500 civilians in North Viet-Nam by our bombing in the past 6 months--the first six months of 1967. Now that figure of 500 is just about the same number of South Vietnamese civilians killed by the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces in the South during the election campaign which has just closed--during about 4 weeks. And this is a matter of policy on the part of the Viet Cong. They were ordered to do so, whereas the civilian casualties in the North were unfortunate by-products of attacks on military targets." *(Department of State Bulletin, vol 57, pp. 413-14.)*

11 September-5 October-- On 11 November, Norodom Sihanouk removes two pro-Peking Cabinet ministers in a crackdown on Communist elements in Cambodia. He also suspends all privately operated newspapers, about half of which are pro-Communist, and announces a nationwide referendum for early next year to choose between himself "and a handful of Cambodian renegades who are betraying our country." The Chief of State says that, unlike the Vietnamese Communists, who are patriots first of all, the Cambodian Communists are betraying their homeland. Two days later, Sihanouk states that he is recalling Cambodia's envoys from Peking "to avoid incidents if there is a demonstration against our embassy." He stresses that this does not constitute a break in diplomatic relations with China but says that the "Chinese practice an imperialism stronger than that of the Americans." On 18 September, after receiving a message from Chou En-lai, Sihanouk reverses his decision to withdraw his diplomatic staff from Peking, although he reaffirms recent pledges to halt Chinese subversive propaganda in Cambodia. On 5 October, however, the Prince warns that he would resign as Chief of State and turn power over to the Army "which would turn towards the Americans" if Peking continued to stir up trouble in his country. *(New York Times, 12, 14, 19 September and 6 October 1967, pp. 1 and 9, 20, 12 and 2 respectively.)*

14 September-- The importance of the NLF programme as an "image-builder" and a countermove to the recent South Vietnamese elections is stressed by the Soviet Government newspaper Izvestia:

"Real prospects are outlined in the NLF programme for South Viet-Nam's development after the final liberation of this much-suffering land from the domination of the American-Saigon clique. The

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programme calls for ending South Viet-Nam's complete economic dependence on US imperialism, for confiscating the property of Washington and its agents, and building an independent self-supporting economy. The NLF proposes democratic reforms in the South Viet-Nam countryside by buying the land from patriotically-minded landowners and confiscating the land of the reactionaries, and genuinely democratic elections, the election of organs of power consisting of representatives of different Parties, social groups, religions and patriotic forces contributing to national emancipation.

In conditions of political and social heterogeneity in South Viet-Nam the NLF programme is a document called upon to rally the overwhelming majority of the population on a patriotic basis, a document of great force of attraction. This programme rests on the solid foundation and takes into account the real interests of all social strata. It looks especially constructive in conditions of utter political helplessness and hopelessness of the Saigon regime which recently staged a scandalous farce of presidential and parliamentary 'elections'.

...More and more people the world over realise that the NLF is today the only serious political force representing the interests of the South Viet-Nam population in deeds, not in words..." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs, no. 13 (Canberra: GPO, 1968), pp. 54-55.)*

Summer-Autumn-- Douglas Pike, in his study War, Peace, and the Viet Cong, discusses the events that led to the Winter-Spring Campaign of 1967-68:

"The chief problem remained, however, and it was not logistical but doctrinal. By mid-1967 the bankruptcy of orthodox Revolutionary Guerrilla War was obvious even to the rank and file. The DRV-NLF forces had not won a single battle of significance in two years. Allied firepower was eating deeply into their reserves of men and supplies. In the same two-year period the PLAF desertion rate had doubled every six months. More and more troops were required from the North, and much to the Northern generals' displeasure, the war steadily was shifting to PAVN shoulders (by late 1968, some 75 percent of the daily combat in South Vietnam was being carried by PAVN). Logistics, always a bottomless well, became a nightmare as supplies were steadily discovered and destroyed. Morale sagged, especially among the PLAF troops. The NLF village structure was in disarray, the NLF financial system under great stress. Most serious of all, true believers were asking openly whether the dogmas of the past were adequate for the stormy present. A loss of ideological faith was leading to confusion and demoralization among the key figures in the South, the cadres. Dissension

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in the Politburo arose over the lack of progress and particularly over General Giap's 'no win' policy. A sense of impotence developed among Northern leaders as American planes continued to pound away at North Vietnamese transportation and communication centers, curtailing the flow of food, consumer goods, and people throughout the country, as well as war materiel in from China and out to South Vietnam. From the Communist capitals abroad, especially from Peking but also from Moscow, came muted but stronger criticism of the means by which the leadership was conducting the war.

All of this, of course, was painfully apparent to the Politburo members, whose hands by now fully controlled the war reins. The moment of decision, the point at which it was clear things no longer could go on as they had, came in the summer of 1967. In Saigon that summer there were many indications that a basic change in Hanoi's strategy was in the offing. Many experts in Saigon predicted a return to pure 'protracted conflict' guerrilla war. What came, however, was not a slowdown but an acceleration of the war's tempo. The press came to label this new strategy the Go-for-Broke doctrine. It is here termed Interim or *ad hoc* Revolutionary Guerrilla War since it seeks to preserve the conceptual framework of orthodox Revolutionary Guerrilla War but contains a host of new concepts such as intensive urban attacks. It clearly bears the stamp of General Giap with regard to concept, execution, timing, shifting of forces, handling of logistics. Considerable evidence, all of it inferential, indicates that General Giap sold his new strategy to the Politburo as a single campaign that would be militarily decisive. For the Politburo, in all probability, it was the 'least worst' of the options open at the moment.

A great deal is known about this Interim or *ad hoc* Revolutionary Guerrilla War from captured documents and the testimony of prisoners and defectors. Also, a surprising amount of our knowledge comes from General Giap's public explanations, particularly his book *Big Victory, Great Task*.

Victory—that is, unification of Vietnam—comes by military action in South Vietnam, General Giap maintains. It does not come through negotiations; in his book he dismisses the idea by never mentioning it. Nor, he says, is victory achieved through U.S. elections. The only way to win, he repeats to the point of tedium, is *militarily, on the ground, in South Vietnam.* This, of course, is the Giap thesis, one not shared by all members of his Politburo. The specific blueprint of his strategy was called the Winter-Spring Campaign." *(Douglas Pike, War, Peace, and the Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969), pp. 124-26.)*

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14-16 September-- On these dates, Nhan Dan and Quan Doi Nhan Dan publish a long statement by Vo Nguyen Giap entitled Big Victory, Great Task. Patrick J. McGarvey, in his book Visions of Victory, comments:

"...His fundamental tenet is that the Communist forces will simply outlast the Americans. Losses on the Communist side are merely means to an end—inflicting losses on the Americans. The Communists need not win any battles, victory goes to the army that outlasts its adversary.

...Giap declared not war but a waiting game, a game in which the Vietnamese Communists considered the costs to themselves and found them bearable in view of the greater costs to the United States, which they believe amount to no less than the worldwide immobilization of American policy. Giap expounded these views in September 1967 in his fourth annual review of the war..., the most authoritative North Vietnamese statement on overall strategy published to date. Giap's analysis, in many respects a classic example of Communist propaganda, is, beneath the overstatement and hyperbole, a fairly sober expression of Hanoi's point of view. The victor of Dien Bien Phu expects the war to last 'five, ten, twenty, or more years.' He considered the war stalemated and believed that the stalemate would work to the Communists' advantage by protracting the conflict until a solution favorable to them became possible. Although Giap claimed that domestic disorder in the United States was likely to increase, he dismissed the possibility that any change in American war policy would result from the 1968 elections. Like a good Leninist, he dismissed the elections as nothing but a reshuffling of posts among the ruling capitalist elite. He did not address himself to the possibility of negotiations, but the entire thrust of his strategy is designed to bring them about. It is the combination of the grueling, protracted war of attrition and morale-shattering attacks on urban centers that, in Giap's view, will eventually force the United States to negotiate a settlement.

General Giap reviewed the course of the war during the preceding two years. He cited the battle of Binh Gia as the triumphant turning point for Communist forces in the South—from guerrilla to mobile warfare. In this battle, which raged during the last weeks of December 1964, and early in January 1965 in Phuoc Tuy Province, near Saigon, Viet Cong units mauled a number of South Vietnamese infantry battalions in a classic engagement in which the initiative rested entirely with the Communists. In Giap's view it was this battle which forced the United States to admit the failure of its 'special war'—defined as the American effort to assist the South Vietnamese Army by all means short of American combat forces. The next strategic sequence

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unfolded, in Giap's view, when the United States committed its troops to a 'local war' in the spring of 1965. Once again, the Americans' 'makeshift strategy' failed. They hoped, he said, to annihilate the Viet Cong main-force units in two swift operations, one north of Saigon and the other in the Central Highlands. When both these operations failed, the United States launched a desperate, constantly escalating 'Blitzkrieg' against the Viet Cong. The failure of American forces to achieve a quick victory was in itself a defeat, for it forced the United States to commit itself to a protracted conflict, which, as we have seen, Giap regards as ineluctably favoring the Communists. Basic American weaknesses, according to Giap, foredoom the Allied effort. He argued that the United States had set definite limits on its military objectives in South Vietnam in an effort to keep the war from interfering with 'political, economic, and social life in the United States' and with American foreign policy in other parts of the world. He predicted increasing political difficulties between the South Vietnamese government and the United States, pointing to the increased desertion rate in the South Vietnamese Army and the growing Americanization of the war as evidence that trouble was brewing.

Another basic weakness, in Giap's eyes, was ARVN's lackluster performance in both combat and pacification. He labeled the assignment of ARVN forces to pacification tasks a strategic setback for the Americans, and predicted that a further deterioration in ARVN's effectiveness would force the United States to divert additional troops from their efforts to seek out and destroy Communist main-force units. The problems facing the United States are so great, he said, that putting 'another 50,000 U.S. troops into the South will be like throwing salt into the sea.'

Giap's counterstrategy is based on his conviction that the global responsibilities of the United States will not permit it to maintain its large troop commitment over the long run, and on his belief that he has created a stalemate that will ultimately favor the Communist side. If his forces simply remain in the field, forcing the United States and its allies to spread out, the Communists can inflict casualties and at the same time avoid head-on clashes with the more powerful American units. The Communists would still maintain the initiative in the sense that the time and place of major battles would rest with them. Eventually, he argued, the United States will tire of this type of fighting and be willing to negotiate a settlement favorable to the Communists.

In his review of the accomplishments of the Communist forces during the 1966-67 dry season, Giap emphasized the strategy that he

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himself had used successfully in the war with France—the concentration of main-force units in a single strategic area rather than the dispersal of them throughout the country. The opening of the Tri-Thien Front, for example, the massing of division-sized elements just south of the 17th parallel in the two northern provinces of Quang Tri and Thua Thien, disrupted American strategy, he said, by forcing the United States to draw troop strength from other areas and in the process all but abandon pacification in the northern coastal provinces of South Vietnam. The move, he claimed, delayed the deployment of large American units in the Mekong Delta, south of Saigon. The decision to open a new front thus enabled the Communists to counter enemy strength without matching it man for man.

It is in his strategy for countering the American buildup that Giap differed substantially from General Thanh. Prior to his death in mid-1967, Thanh called for an expansion of main-force units throughout the country. It will be recalled that in his analysis of the 1966-67 dry season, Thanh pointedly neglected to mention the Tri-Thien Front. Giap further departed from Thanh's proposed strategy by insisting that the main-force units do not necessarily have to match the enemy's in strength. The expansion of main-force units, Giap argued, must conform to the 'practical conditions of each region,' a statement that was essentially a warning against over-committing Communist assets where American strength was great.

Giap's analysis of the 1966-67 campaign sheds light on the large-scale clashes in the Central Highlands that occurred during the 1967-68 dry-season campaign. The Communists' strategy there repeats many basic aspects of the Tri-Thien Front. Neighboring Laos and Cambodia afford the Communist main forces the same sanctuary as the DMZ and the areas just north of it did the previous year. The Central Highlands, like the areas near the DMZ, are relatively uninhabited, and thus serve as an arena to which large numbers of American troops must be diverted from the populous coastal provinces where pacification programs are under way. Largely by diversive actions, then, Giap hoped to destroy the one thing that seriously threatens the Communist infrastructure in South Vietnam—the pacification program. The costs, in terms of casualties, are high, but as Giap showed in the French war, he regards any cost in Communist lives as bearable so long as a sufficient number of casualties are inflicted on the enemy and replacements for his troops continue to be available. His is not an army that sends coffins north; it is by the traffic in homebound American coffins that Giap measures his success.

An able tactician as well as strategist, Giap analyzed at length several aspects of American and Communist fighting methods. He

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pointed to basic American weaknesses, and, more important, discussed Communist countertactics. He unfailingly stressed the unconventional aspects of the war, and though he did not altogether ignore the regular forces, his emphasis on lightning raids on urban centers, sporadic mortar and rocket attacks, and harassing raids on communication lines underscored his commitment to guerrilla warfare.

Giap is certain that his troops have succeeded in forcing American units into scattered deployment, and thus in wresting the initiative from them. He pointed to American positions along the DMZ, where the Marines are forced to defend 'from 500 to 600 square kilometers,' and have in reality become small, scattered groups. In his view the same phenomenon is occurring in the Central Highlands, where United States troops are forced to defend 'more than 200 square kilometers.' The areas around such American strong points as the Marine bases at Da Nang and Chu Lai he described as 'isolated islands in the open sea of thd people's war.' Despite the collective might of these strong points and defensive positions, Giap takes comfort from the fact that individually they are vulnerable to Communist attack. Each of the widely scattered American positions must, like Con Thien and Khe Sanh, be defended against conventional attack by manpower diverted from other areas.

Giap derided American search-and-destroy missions, claiming that their outstanding characteristic was their failure to find Communist forces. One infers, however, that they at least succeed in disrupting Communist plans, for they force Communist regimental and division headquarters and staffs to uproot themselves and move about to evade the American forces. Giap also derided the size and armament of such American units as the United States 1st Infantry Division, the 'Big Red One.' Their reliance on armored vehicles, artillery, and aviation, he claimed, made them cumbersome and unable to respond flexibly to Communist probes. Yet in the next breath he claimed that the major weakness of the United States 1st Air Cavalry Division was its lack of artillery and armor. The underlying point of these contradictory statements seems to be that the size of American units is such that the preparations for an action telegraph their coming, and give the Communists the option of fighting or evading them. Giap described the heavy reliance on air and artillery firepower as the 'major U.S. weakness,' and he seems to believe that American air and artillery bombardments are ultimately self-destructive, because their occasional indiscriminate use in populated areas damages the cause of the United States in the eyes of the world.

As for the Communists' tactics, Giap revealed that he assigned top priority to inflicting casualties on American and Allied forces.

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American and Allied bases and supply lines were next, and the ARVN forces and Saigon regime were given third and fourth priority. He outlined two methods of fighting that the Communists were giving increasing emphasis on the battlefield: the 'coordinated' and the 'independent' methods. In these passages the debate on strategy discussed in the first pages of this study comes to fruition, the tactics described combine the best of both sides. The 'coordinated' method relies heavily on infantry troops, with the support of engineers, artillery, and sabotage units. Giap's description of the method as 'promising' implies that it had only recently been introduced. The heavy fighting in the summer and fall of 1967 near the DMZ and in the Central Highlands apparently reflect the coordinated method. In essence, it comes down to the heavy use of main-force units when the situation gives the Communists a chance of inflicting heavy casualties. The coordinated aspects of the tactic call for planned artillery fire to support infantry moves or assaults, and an increased use of harassing guerrilla actions to either mask the thrust of the main-force action or divert elements of the main enemy force from the main engagement.

The 'independent' method, which Giap described as 'a unique creation of the people's war,' includes mortar and rocket raids on Allied base areas and commando raids on enemy strong points. Such assaults are carried out by 'crack special units,' small in number but high in quality. They complement the coordinated method by inflicting high casualties at little cost to themselves. They also disrupt American planning, Giap holds, by foiling logistical operations. They differ from simple guerrilla harassment in the quality of the special units involved and the armament they use. In the mortar and rocket attacks on Da Nang Airbase, for example, the Communists have used a variety of high-caliber armament, including the Soviet 140-millimeter rocket. The independent method, according to Giap, is especially useful outside the normal operating areas of regular Communist main-force units.

Giap professed to see nothing but escalation on the horizon. He outlined steps he expected both sides to take in the coming months and years, and despite needed improvements among his own forces, which he spelled out, proclaimed his fundamental confidence in ultimate victory.

He envisaged the dispatching of more American troops to South Vietnam, but predicted that the number of actual combat troops would not increase appreciably because of the size and complexity of American logistical and security requirements. He predicted that the United States would extend the ground war into Laos and Cambodia. He also predicted stepped-up air operations over

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North Vietnam, but dismissed their potential for damage, citing the usual exaggerated anti-aircraft statistics and statements by American officials questioning the effectiveness of air operations. Naval bombardment of North Vietnam's coast would also increase. Giap predicted that the United States would invade the North and would find the North prepared. He hinted that Chinese troops might intervene in the event of an invasion, but emphasized self-reliance: 'Our people can and must...positively seek assistance from the socialist countries and peoples of the world, and they value this assistance highly. Nevertheless, relying mainly on our own strength must be seen as a matter of primary, decisive importance.'

To prepare for the expected moves by the United States, improvements among the Communist forces were needed. In the North, Giap confessed, some air-defense units had performed poorly, and those whose negligence had caused avoidable damage and losses should be disciplined. Military training and organization were in need of improvements and adjustments—a need no doubt arising from the increased conscription and hasty training given recruits from 1965 on. The North Vietnamese Army must 'develop the superiority of our existing weapons, invent highly effective tactics, and improve military organization.' The economic sector must support the war effort with increased production, guided by the slogan 'Everything for the Front Line; Everything for Victory.'

Giap clearly hoped to improve his position on the Southern battlefield in the months ahead. He called for greater coordination among the various types of forces, and insisted that the key strategic task was the improvement and expansion of the guerrilla forces, an indication that as early as September 1967 plans were being laid for the Tet Offensive. He predicted that 'strong, stable, widespread' guerrilla units would become the 'shock troops' of the revolution.

Giap also saw political opportunities to be exploited in the future. 'The more Americanized the war becomes, the more disoriented' the South Vietnamese Army and government would be. The more acute the 'contradictions' between Washington and Saigon, the more favorable the climate for political agitation among such groups as the Buddhists. The Viet Cong, he implied, should attune their political activities to the growing antagonism among their enemies.

Despite his self-reliant attitude, Giap closes by viewing the war from the perspective of the world stage. The war in Vietnam was the center of the worldwide 'national liberation struggle.' He urged other countries, in Asia, Latin America, and Africa, to take advantage of American preoccupation with Vietnam to push national liberation movements of their own.

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Our adversary obviously cannot be dismissed as a provincial who fails to grasp the dynamics of world politics." *(Patrick J. McGarvey, Visions of Victory (Stanford: Stanford University, 1969), pp. 40-46; Text in Ibid., pp. 199-251.)*

15 September-- A Hanoi source is reported by the New York Times as quoting Pham Van Dong as reiterating: "'If the American side really desires conversations, it should first cease unconditionally the bombings and every other act of war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.'" *(Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs, Mission to Hanoi (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), p. 331.)*

22 September-- At the 22nd United Nations General Assembly, Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko is reported to have "said the Viet-Nam war was the most large scale since 1945 and the danger was that 'at any moment the fighting can overrun new areas and draw new States into its orbit.'" *(Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs, Mission to Hanoi (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), p. 337.)*

24 September-- Peking radio denounces US-Soviet "collusion" at the 22nd UN General Assembly: "They are trying to induce the Vietnamese people to accept the 'peace talks' fraud and, at the same time, preparing public opinion for further expansion of the US war of aggression in Viet-Nam." With regard to US Ambassador Goldberg's speech of 21 September: "He had the audacity to call the Geneva Agreements of 1954 and 1962 'the basis for settlement' of the Viet-Nam question and to use these agreements which have been scrapped up by the United States to bring about 'peace talks', to get the US aggressors out of their predicament on the battlefield in South Viet-Nam, and to realise US imperialism's criminal design of perpetuating the division of Viet-Nam and carrying on its occupation of the south." Soviet-American collusion has been particularly intense in recent days. "Before the current UN General Assembly session began, the US imperialists and Soviet revisionists were colluding more closely in scheming a new round of 'peace talks' fraud. On 15 September, Anatoliy Dobrynin, Soviet Ambassador to the United States, who had just returned to Washington from a long 'vacation' at home, had talks with US Secretary of State Dean Rusk on Viet-Nam and other issues to pave the way for prearranged talks between Rusk and Gromyko. On the same day, Soviet Minister in London Vasev saw British Foreign Secretary George Brown to discuss the Viet-Nam question. On 21 September Lyndon Johnson saw the American Ambassador to the Soviet Union Llewellyn Thompson and discussed with him 'all pending matters' between the United States and the Soviet Union...It was announced that, during the UN General Assembly session, intense talks will be conducted among the foreign

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ministers of the United States, the Soviet Union, and other countries. Western news agencies disclosed that the Viet-Nam and Middle East questions will be the central topics in these talks." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs— Vietnam, no. 13 (Canberra: GPO, 1968), pp. 67-68.)*

26 September-- The Vietnam News Agency comments on Arthur Goldberg's "hypocritical" and tortuous allegations [of 21 September in the UN General Assembly]...only aimed at deceiving public opinion...If the American side really wants to talk, it must first of all stop unconditionally the bombing and all other acts of war against the DRV. The United States has no right to demand any reciprocity whatsoever..." *(Joint US Public Affairs Office, Vietnam: Documents and Research Notes (Saigon: JUSPAO, 1969), p. 12.)*

October-- The Soviet-oriented World Marxist Review denounces the 3 September elections in South Vietnam as "rigged": "It appears that in some of the larger towns, where foreign observers watched the polling, the authorities were careful to avoid the cruder methods of pressure, with the result that Thieu and his running mate polled a minority vote. On the other hand—if one is to credit the official returns—they were unanimously supported in rural areas where the National Liberation Front has a long-established and solid mass following...That the whole thing was a fraud need hardly be proved. It was a calculated political maneuver by Washington, and it is important to know its real aims and possible repercussions in the light of its present policy and continued escalation...Two things exert a substantial and increasing influence on that policy. First, the more articulate realization, both by the general public and prominent personalities, that America is waging a hopeless war in Vietnam. Second, next year's presidential elections when the Johnson administration will have to give account to the electorate of the results of its Vietnam aggression." A note of pessimism creeps into the commentary as it is noted that "there are indications that the public is being conditioned to accept the illusion that something is being done to resolve the conflict." Still, victory for the revolutionary forces will eventually be attained because the imperialists have no program for solving the nation's basic national and social problems. Such a program does exist, however, namely that of the National Liberation Front. It stresses that the NLF is prepared for "sincere and far-reaching cooperation with all patriotic-minded elements, not excluding those who do not accept its leadership." This, plus the comprehensive and concrete nature of its proposals, assures that the NLF program will exert a great "power of attraction" among the populace. *(Jan Prazsky, "Vietnam: the Free-Elections Farce and the Real Road to Freedom", World Marxist Review, X, no. 10 (October 1967), pp. 20-21.)*

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12 October-- In discussions with newsmen, Secretary Rusk stresses that the United States has always been in favor of having the United Nations Security Council take action on the Vietnam conflict. This, however, has not been possible because the DRV is unwilling and the Soviets have stood ready to veto the American resolution in the Council. He also reveals that he has always regarded Communist aggression as being far more encompassing than the "domino theory." He says: "I have never subscribed to the domino theory; its much to esoteric. There are North Vietnamese regiments today fighting in South Viet-Nam. There are North Vietnamese armed forces in Laos being opposed by Laotian forces. There are North Vietnamese-trained guerrillas operating in northeast Thailand. There are Communist dissident elements in Burma who are being aided, encouraged, and helped from outside Burma across the Chinese frontier. There was a major Communist effort in 1965 to pull off a coup d'etat against Indonesia. You don't need the domino theory. Look at their proclaimed doctrine, and look at what they're doing about it." *(Department of State Bulletin, vol 57, pp. 559-60.)*

14 October-- Peking radio comments on President Johnson's San Antonio speech of 29 September. It states: "While launching a slanderous attack on the Vietnamese people who are engaged in a heroic war of resistance to the US aggression, Johnson declared that 'the United States is willing to stop all aerial and naval bombardment of North Viet-Nam when this will lead promptly to productive discussions. We, of course, assume that while discussions proceed, North Viet-Nam would not take advantage of the bombing cessation or limitation'...Then on 12 October Dean Rusk declared at his news conference that if Hanoi could say 'yes' publicly or privately to Johnson's offer, he would 'depart today' for any mutually convenient spot to 'negotiate.' ...The statements by Johnson and Rusk are designed to push further ahead the 'peace talks' offensive recently launched by US imperialism in collaboration with Soviet revisionism and other reactionaries...Their purpose remains the same—to bring about 'peace talks' so US imperialism can avoid suffering more disastrous defeats on the South Viet-Nam battlefield, placate the disgruntled public at home whose attack on the administration's Viet-Nam policy has become more and more bitter, and meet the needs of the 1968 elections..." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 13 (Canberra: GPO, 1968), pp. 84-85.)*

16 October-- In testimony before Senator Edward Kennedy's Senate Subcommittee on Refugees and Escapees, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs William P. Bundy contradicts information which has been presented to the subcommittee by Roger Hilsman. Where Hilsman estimated that infiltration from

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North Vietnam in 1965 totaled 7,400 men, Bundy says that the actual figures were 26,000 and that the probable infiltration in 1966 was 54,800. According to the best intelligence judgment available, in-country recruitment of Communist guerrillas has dropped to somewhere between 3,000 and 5,000 per month. VC control of the South Vietnamese population has also declined to about 20 percent from approximately 26 percent two years earlier. Speaking of Hilsman's book, To Move a Nation, Bundy says: "It was the North Vietnamese who first sent regular units in and made the war more of a conventional war. Mr. Hilsman in his book, I regret to say, overlooks certain evidence that had been publicly revealed, and does not make that point as clear as he might; in fact he denies it, and wrongly so, based on his not having examined public statements and testimony before the committees of the Congress on the fact that the North Vietnamese sent in regular units as early as December of 1964, in significant quantity in the first 6 months of 1965. Now in the past two and a half years you have something that to describe it as an old-style guerrilla war is clearly a misnomer. It has many guerrilla aspects, but it has many conventional war aspects, too..." [Note that the figures used by Mr. Bundy on the infiltration from North Vietnam are less than those contained in the US State Department's "Working Paper on the North Vietnamese Role in South Vietnam" (See 9 May 1968 entry)]. *(90th Cong 1st Sess, Civilian Casualty, Social Welfare, and Refugee Problems in South Vietnam, Hearings before the Subcommittee to Investigate Problems Connected with Refugees and Escapees of the Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. Senate (Washington: GPO, 1968), pp. 203-16.)*

16 October-- In a videotaped USIA interview, Secretary of State Rusk speculates that if the DRV decided to negotiate that the USSR would support such a stand. He is asked how he can explain this statement in light of the military aid that the Soviets are providing to Hanoi. He responds: "Well, I think that I perhaps would not quite agree that the bulk of the assistance going to Hanoi is coming from Moscow. In terms of the weapons that we see, the bulk of the arms which are used in South Viet-Nam, the small arms, the ammunition, the mortars, things of that sort, are of Chinese origin. And that most of the daily supplies come across from China. The more sophisticated weapons, the surface-to-air missiles, certain MIG aircraft, certain rockets, seem to come from the Soviet Union. But in terms of the struggle that is going on in South Viet-Nam, the overwhelming quantity of the supply comes from China. The weapons that they use in North Viet-Nam, primarily against our aircraft, do come from the Soviet Union." (*Department of State Bulletin, vol 57, p. 598.)*

30 October-- At the conclusion of an address in Columbus, Indiana, Secretary of State Dean Rusk discusses the factors which he believes sustain the DRV leaders:

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"At first, and until recently, the hope of military success in the South. That possibility is now beyond their reach.

Perhaps they had some hope of a political collapse in South Viet-Nam. But in the midst of the war, the South Vietnamese have adopted a new constitution and elected a President and a Vice-President and a Senate and a House, as well as village and hamlet leaders.

Perhaps Hanoi has hoped to build up international pressure to cause us to alter our course. That is not occurring...I can tell you that we are not under pressure from other governments to pull out of Viet-Nam.

Finally, Hanoi undoubtedly has been encouraged by the peace demonstrations in this country...A few days ago a high North Vietnamese official called the peace demonstrators in this country comrades in arms..." *(Department of State Bulletin, vol 57, p. 705.)*

Autumn-Winter-- Perhaps the best documented operation in the history of the VC was the offensive that was soon to be conducted during the Lunar New Year 1968. Viet-Nam: Documents and Research Notes, no. 28-29, contains a commentary on the VC preparation for the "general offensive and general uprising":

"...secret plans were passed down the VC military chain of command and through the structure of the People's Revolutionary Party (PRP). Troops and Party members pored over special indoctrination texts defining 'the new situation and mission'. Propaganda leaflets, urging the people to flock to the Viet Cong side, were printed and distributed by the thousands when the action began...

...[One such document, dated 1 November,] was a directive from a PRP Provincial Standing Committee to subordinate district committees and branches, possibly those located in Binh Dinh province. It gave instructions to 'act and act fast' in what it depicted as a highly favorable situation 'carefully judged' by the Party. 'A new era, a real revolutionary period, an offensive and uprising period has begun,' the directive declared. It added later: 'We need only to make a swift assault to secure the target and gain total victory.'

Party members were to be told that the offensive would take place 'in the very near future.' They were to be indoctrinated in the idea of sacrificing themselves for the forthcoming 'decisive hour.' Specific and detailed instructions were given on forming suicide groups, or 'determined-to-die' (quyet tu) units with the mission of murdering 'wicked tyrants and administrative personnel', a phrase which the Viet Cong apply to GVN officials and their supporters.

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Stress was placed on expanding popular involvement in the VC cause by such means as recruiting women and children or wresting more economic support from the masses.

'When the uprising is at its apex in the countryside and the masses are seething with fervor...' the directive said, 'we must commit all manpower and resources to the speedy liberation of our homeland. We must knock on every inhabitant's door to borrow the maximum possible amount of money and food, which will be taken immediately without resorting to the normal procedures followed previously.'

The pragmatic approach of this directive contrasts with the idealistic tone of...[another such document], an 'absolute secret' draft guidance from the My Tho area. The purpose of this guidance was to indoctrinate troops on how to behave in the anticipated occupation of cities and towns.

While the first document emphasized such points as the assassination of civilians, the second was founded on the thesis that communist forces love and are loved by the people. It urged rural guerrillas to uphold 'revolutionary ethics', maintain strict discipline, and desist from looting, drunkenness and other 'libertine' behavior upon entering the strange environment of the cities.

The document also discussed troop behavior in the combat expected to lead to the 'liberation' of the cities. 'We should be firm to hold on to the combat positions and fight to the last man,' it said. 'Never should we withdraw without order. If we do not accomplish our mission, the enemy will link up together, reorganize his strength, consolidate his morale, counterattack us and cause us difficulties and losses.' *(Viet-Nam: Documents and Research Notes, no. 28-29 (Saigon: US Mission, Vietnam, 1968), pp. 1-2.)*

November-- A high-level DRV delegation, led by Lao Dong Politburo members Le Duan, Vo Nguyen Giap and Nguyen Duy Trinh, arrives in Moscow for the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution. The delegates stop in Peking on their return journey to Hanoi. P. J. Honey, a British specialist on North Vietnamese politics, notes with regard to the coming Tet offensive: "The magnitude of the proposed military operation exceeded anything undertaken in the past and demanded increased supplies of modern weapons, which could only come from the USSR and China. The delegation leaders would,therefore, have had to inform their Soviet and Chinese supporters of their changed intentions during this visit, unless they had been informed earlier, and to justify the new plan. In any case, there is no doubt that Soviet and Chinese leaders were aware of what the Vietnamese communists intended to do by early November at the latest."

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(P. J. Honey, "The Offensive: Hanoi's Change of Strategy", China News Analysis, 22 March 1968, p. 6.)

2 November-- In a statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Ambassador to the UN Arthur Goldberg traces the long course of the efforts by the United States to get the United Nations Security Council to take cognizance of the war in Vietnam. He states that Hanoi has not been willing to accept the jurisdiction of the Security Council and that he is deeply disappointed at the Communist rebuffs which, in his view, negate a proper concern for the role of the United Nations in the conflict in Vietnam. He also declares that the United States is willing to have the Geneva Conference powers of 1954 and 1962 reconvene in order to deal with the issues in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, but that Moscow, as co-chairman, must agree with such action. The Soviets, however, are unwilling to do so because of North Vietnamese objections. *(Department of State Bulletin, vol 57, pp. 667-72.)*

4 November-- On this date, Radio Hanoi broadcasts the text of an article by Lao Dong First Secretary Le Duan, entitled "Forward Under the Glorious Banner of the October Revolution", which was written to congratulate the USSR on the 50th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution. Viet-Nam: Documents and Research Notes, no. 9, contains a summary analysis of the article, as follows:

"Le Duan commemorates the triumph of communism in Russia with special reference to its influence on the development of Vietnamese communism. Much of his article is a doctrinaire review of history, but he also sets forth North Viet-Nam's concept of its present role.

'The Vietnamese revolution is a component of world revolution and its successes have never been separated from the latter's,' he says. 'For the Vietnamese people, the victories of the October Revolution, of the resistance against Fascism, of the August Revolution [by the Viet Minh in 1945], and of the Chinese revolution, of the resistance against the French colonialists and the American imperialists at present, are great events in one and the same historical chain'...

In his article, Le Duan sees the October Revolution as 'a vivid lesson for an ingenious and flexible application of the theory on revolutionary violence and on insurrection for the conquest of power.'

The international significance of the October Revolution, he says, is that it produced 'a remarkable model of strategic and tactical conduct' for other revolutionaries. He credits Lenin and the

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Russian Bolsheviks with a formula still valid for the seizure of power. They created a 'monolithic' Party, forged a 'worker-peasant alliance' and combined 'armed force and political force into powerful revolutionary violence.'

This and later victories of the Soviet Union, according to Le Duan, 'not only safeguarded the first socialist state but also generated favorable conditions for the triumph of revolution in a series of countries in Europe and Asia, thus allowing socialism to outgrow the boundaries of one country and become a world system, pushing ahead the national liberation movement now surging up as tidal waves, and creating for world revolution an overall offensive position against imperialism.'

At present, Le Duan claims, 'the main content' of revolutionary struggle in Asia, Africa and Latin America lies 'in the struggle against neo-colonialism.' He charges socialist countries with the responsibility for supporting various 'national liberation movements.' On the other hand, he leaves such movements no room for non-alignment or nationalism apart from communism. He states: 'Though national and democratic in content, national liberation revolution no longer remains in the framework of bourgeois revolution; instead it has become an integral part of proletarian revolution and dictatorship of the proletariat on a worldwide scale...In other words if formerly nationalism was aligned with capitalism, nowadays it must necessarily be aligned with socialism.' Without such an alignment, Le Duan argues, 'neo-colonialism' will attract newly independent countries to 'the capitalist road.'

Today, according to Le Duan, Viet-Nam forms 'the spearhead of the world revolutionary tide.' Leninist principles adapted in North Viet-Nam's August Revolution of 1945 are now being correctly applied in South Viet-Nam. 'In the process of the struggle,' Le Duan says, 'the revolutionary movements in both areas [North and South Viet-Nam] have been closely coordinated, greatly influencing and vigorously impelling each other.'

Le Duan's article preserves North Viet-Nam's position of neutrality in the Sino-Soviet dispute. While praising the October Revolution, he also notes that the later Chinese revolution also 'greatly stimulated our people in their struggle.' His stress on 'revolutionary violence' in the 'national liberation movement' resembles Mao Tse-tung's. But he balances it with a Soviet-like argument that the role of communist parties in developed capitalist nations is also important and by pointing to the need for higher economic development in socialist countries as a means of attracting followers. 'In the common struggle for socialist revolution,' he says, 'the urgent problem now is to consolidate and strengthen the unity of the socialist camp...'"

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(Joint US Public Affairs Office, Viet-Nam: Documents and Research Notes (Saigon: JUSPAO, 1967), pp. 1-2.)

4 November-- Norodom Sihanouk announces in a press conference that he has received fresh assurances of friendship and noninterference from Chinese Premier Chou En-lai. Sihanouk condemns US policy in Vietnam and accuses American forces of repeated violations of Cambodia's border with South Vietnam. He repeats past statements that, except for some men who might briefly be "pushed" over the border in the course of fighting, there are no Vietnamese Communist troops using Cambodian territory. He says that Cambodia has supplied no military equipment to North Vietnamese or VC forces. In addition, he expresses the view that Vietnamese Communism would be distinctive and not subservient to China and accuses the United States of trying to destroy the very forces that could be a barrier to Chinese expansion in Southeast Asia, "if such a thing exists." The Cambodian Chief of State says that he thinks that open Peking support for the Communist movement in his country will end but that surreptitious support will continue. In view of the easing of relations with China, he continues, the referendum that he had announced in order to test the extent of pro-Communist feeling in his country will not be held. *(New York Times, 5 November 1967, pp. 1 and 6.)*

6 November-- While visiting the United States, Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma of Laos is interviewed by U.S. News & World Report. He states that there is no indication from Hanoi that a cessation of bombing would bring the start of peace negotiations and adds: "If there is a halt of the bombing it could aggravate the military situation for Vietnam as well as Laos, because we do not know what the precise reaction of North Vietnam will be." He claims that there are about 40,000 North Vietnamese troops in Laos. Except for the North Vietnamese, he says, the Royal Laotian Government could "take care of" the Pathet Lao "very well," since the Pathet Lao "have never been very strong." He opposes the construction of an infiltration barrier across Laos ..."because it would not be effective. Also, it would involve a violation of the neutrality of Laos by the Americans. There is another reason: We are all seeking a limit to the conflict. If we put a barrier into Laos--that is to say, expand the conflict to that extent--the further we will be from our goal, which is to find peace. Therefore, from the military point of view, this barrier would not be effective. And from the political view, on the international scene, the barrier would only extend the conflict into Laos, but perhaps even to Thailand." *(U.S. News & World Report, 6 November 1967, pp. 106-07.)*

8 November-- In an interview with Guardian correspondent Joergen E. Petersen, Pham Van Dong reveals that his Government had expected the recent American escalation of the war: "Other stages of the

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escalation are foreseeable. After all, that is the logic of this war. A new stage in the escalation follows a new series of defeats of the aggressor which will inevitably lead to still heavier defeats. And so on until the final defeat of the aggressor." He assesses the second session of the Bertrand Russell Tribunal, soon to open in Copenhagen, as an "event of great international importance...No doubt the second session at Copenhagen will throw still more light on these monstrous crimes and will further rally world public opinion in severely condemning American aggression against the Vietnamese people." He reiterates the DRV demand for an unconditional halt to the bombing and refers the interviewer to Hanoi's 4-point stand and the new NLF programme and insists that the Front is the only true representative of the South Vietnamese people: "In the south of our country, faced by an invading army of more than half a million American troops and mercenaries, the struggle compels everyone to take a stand of a fundamental nature: are you in favour or against the American aggressors? There is no third road." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 13 (Canberra: GPO, 1968), pp. 108-10.)*

10 November-- The DRV Foreign Ministry issues a statement repeating previous Hanoi demands on the bombing and on American interference in Vietnamese internal affairs. *(Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs, Mission to Hanoi (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), p. 343.)*

17 November-- President Johnson tells newsmen that a statement in a Hanoi newspaper has rejected his 11 November proposal to hold shipboard peace talks. He says that there is no change in the DRV position since the Ho Chi Minh letter to him. *(Department of State Bulletin, vol 57, p. 775.)*

17 November-- As subsequently revealed by a newsman, General Westmoreland informs a background dinner conference that Cambodia has become a major supply route for the Vietcong. It is believed that the Cambodian port of Sihanoukville, on the Gulf of Siam, has become a major inlet for war supplies to the DRV and Vietcong forces within South Vietnam. Westmoreland emphasizes that the enemy can "fight his large forces only at the edge of his sanctuaries," as has been revealed at Con Thien, at Dak To, at Song Be, and Loc Ninh, and along the DMZ. Westmoreland suspects the Chinese merchants in Phnom Penh have become rich selling rice to Communist forces. *(Washington Post, 25 November 1967, p. 8; Baltimore Sun, 24 November 1967, p. 1.)*

20 November-- Testifying in support of the foreign aid program before the Senate Appropriations Committee, Secretary Rusk declares that President Johnson's "San Antonio Formula, that we would stop the

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bombing of North Vietnam when it would lead promptly to productive talks and that we assumed that North Vietnam would not take military advantage of this stopping of bombing during such discussions" has been rejected by Hanoi. He says that the United States is disappointed that the DRV did not see fit to explore the formula but adds: "We have to conclude that at the present time it remains Hanoi's position that we must commit ourselves to a permanent unconditional stoppage of the bombing...We still feel that, if we were to undertake such a step, we ought to know something about what would happen afterwards...That does not mean that the San Antonio Formula is closed. We would hope that at some point we might at least get some sort of counterproposal that is different from the public statements that have been made by Hanoi thus far." Asked about the extent of Soviet aid to North Vietnam, Rusk replies: "I would be surprised if the total U.S.S.R. assistance to North Vietnam would run in the order of a billion dollars a year...The Soviet assistance in North Vietnam has been heavily concentrated in those weapons that are used in North Vietnam. There have been some rockets, certain types of mortars, appearing in the South--a few Soviet arms in the South. But the bulk of the arms we find in the South these days are Chinese supplied. There is a sort of rough division of labor there. The Soviets have furnished most of the sophisticated materiel in the North, such as SAM missiles, radar and antiaircraft, but the infantry materiel, small arms, machineguns, mortars, particularly in the South, are made in China." *(90th Cong 1st Sess Foreign Assistance and Related Agencies Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1968, Hearings before the Committee on Appropriations, U.S. Senate (Washington: GPO, 1967), pp. 412-14.)*

29 November-- Upon returning to Saigon after visiting the United States, General Westmoreland says: "It was clear to me that North Vietnamese forces were taking advantage of the eastern border areas with or without the consent of Cambodian authorities. This is Viet Cong doctrine to use international border areas." He further states that captured documents reveal that Hanoi has ordered its troops to deny their presence on Cambodian soil and that the operations are so covert that the Cambodians may not be aware of them. *(Baltimore Sun, 30 November 1967, p. 2.)*

4 December-- The US State Department sends a note to the Cambodian Government expressing deep concern "over the critical issue of Vietcong-North Vietnamese use of Cambodian territory" and emphasizing American willingness to help control this problem through the ICC. Sebsequently, the Cambodian Government accuses the US of seeking a pretext to justify American military action in Cambodia. *(New York Times, 28 December 1967, pp. 1 and 17.)*

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6 December-- In an address at Rosemont College in Philadelphia, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., is critical of the bombing of North Vietnam. He says: "Bombing has become an insuperable objection to negotiations. It has never been an effective weapon against a rural country. As we escalate, the other side enlarges its effort. It protracts the stalemate...Bombing for two years and eight months has increased the cost of infiltration. But as we have enlarged our bombing they have increased their penetration. The bombing has hardened their will to resist. It has had little effect and every escalation makes the risk of Russia and China becoming involved more acute." He favors slowing down the war and convincing the enemy that it cannot win. He goes on to say that nationalism is the most effective new weapon against the monolith of international Communism. He criticizes the Johnson administration "assumption that Hanoi is the spearhead of Chinese aggression. There is no reason to suppose North Vietnam would be a puppet of China. Their whole history is stamped by resistance to China." *(Philadelphia Bulletin, 7 December 1967, p. 30.)*

8 December-- A State Department spokesman explains American policy toward the National Liberation Front. He says that President Johnson on 28 July 1965 made it clear that the NLF would have no problem being represented in peace talks and having its views heard. As to the question of the Front's representatives coming to the United Nations under an official invitation, the United States would oppose their coming to conduct a propaganda campaign. The US would also oppose any plan which would turn the Government of South Vietnam over to the NLF, since it believes that the South Vietnamese must work out their own future through electoral processes. The statement points out that the Saigon Government has offered full reconciliation and rights of citizenship to individuals associated with the Viet Cong. The GVN has also made clear its willingness to enter into contacts with elements of the NLF. *(Department of State Bulletin, vol 57, p. 854.)*

10 December-- The Soviet news agency Tass warns the US against extending its military action from Vietnam into Cambodia and Laos. It declares: "United States attempts to cause further aggravation of the situation in Southeast Asia will be strongly rebuffed by the peace-loving states of the world, and the United States will naturally bear the complete responsibility for the consequences of its actions." This statement follows a number of articles in the Soviet press expressing concern over increasing discussion in the United States of the doctrine of "hot pursuit". According to the New York Times, there are also indications that Moscow's declaration is linked to the departure from office of US Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, who had reportedly counciled President Johnson against carrying the war across South Vietnam's borders. With MaNamara gone, it is suggested, Moscow may have

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thought it opportune to put the Americans on notice against widening the war. The Soviet statement also reflects displeasure with Souvanna Phouma, whom Moscow accuses of eroding his country's neutrality. In recent days, Soviet-sponsored clandestine radio broadcasts had pointedly reminded the Premier of his obligation to maintain strict neutrality. *(New York Times, 11 December 1967, pp. 1 and 5.)*

11 December-- Radio Liberation broadcasts on NLF Central Committee communique which declares that it "is necessary to develop and strengthen education among the combatants of the People's Liberation Armed Forces and our compatriots in all walks of life in order to develop their tradition of heroism and bravery and their spirit of militant solidarity and indomitability, to praise their achievements, to heighten their national pride and their determination to fight to win, and to improve their awareness of the new situation and tasks and the Front's lines and policies as reflected in the political program. It is necessary to stimulate all people and forces to advance strongly to step up the military and political struggles and win new great victories. The Front's political program must be disseminated extensively and intensively among all strata of people, ethnic minority people, and religions in the cities, in areas still under temporary enemy control, and in the liberated areas. Propaganda must be carried out among puppet troops and government personnel to make them understand that the Front's political programme has provided the most correct way to liberate the people and has created favorable conditions for them to join other compatriots in the anti-US national salvation struggle." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 13 (Canberra: GPO, 1968), p. 130.)*

12 December-- The Lao Dong newspaper Nhan Dan reiterates the DRV 4-point stand and states that the "Vietnamese people have made it clear more than once that the United Nations has no jurisdiction whatsoever to settle the Viet-Nam problem, and that all UN acts of interference in the Viet-Nam issue are completely illegal and invalid." The North Vietnamese also reaffirm that the "Geneva Agreements on Viet-Nam constitute an international legal document which the countries participating in the Geneva conference, as well as other countries and the United Nations, have the duty to respect." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 13 (Canberra: GPO, 1968), p. 130.)*

12 December-- Peking radio denounces Soviet-American collusion "to bring about UN interference in the Viet-Nam question and to peddle the 'peace talks' fraud at the United Nations, which

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is under US-Soviet control. It is aimed at preparing public opinion for further extension of the Viet-Nam war by the United States and absolving it of its criminal responsibility in this action." The broadcast notes that it has been "reported that after Goldberg sounded out the reactions of other Security Council members, some diplomatic sources in the United Nations disclosed that the Soviet Union 'would not oppose a discussion of Viet-Nam' by the Security Council. According to the American *Christian Science Monitor*, the Soviet revisionist leaders suggested that 'Hanoi and the NLF ought to take advantage of the UN forum for pleading their case.' It is clear from all this that the Soviet revisionist clique is eager to lure the Vietnamese people into the trap laid by the United States. In co-ordination with US manoeuvres, Soviet diplomats recently went out of their way at the United Nations to urge renewed efforts for the trick of inducing 'peace talks' through a bombing pause." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 13 (Canberra: GPO, 1968), p. 131.)*

16 December-- The National Liberation Front issues the following communique over Radio Liberation with regard to the forthcoming religious holidays:

"In compliance with its humanitarian policy and its respect for the freedom of worship, each year the Front advocates ceasing military attacks on the major traditional holidays, which are related to the sentimental and moral life of our people. Under the pressure of genuine public opinion and faced with the demand of the majority of puppet troops, the US imperialists and the country-selling Vietnamese traitors usually are compelled to abide by the Front's policy. Yet, because of their cruel and barbarous nature, the US imperialists and the Vietnamese traitors used to seek all means to sabotage the Front's order on the cessation of military attacks, in an attempt to acquire an advantageous military position and to disrupt our people's activities on these traditional holidays. Therefore, the Political Affairs Department draws the attention of all units of the Liberation Armed Forces to the following points:

(1) All of the Liberation Armed Forces should strictly carry out the Front's order on the cessation of military attacks in compliance with the Front's communique and with the 17 and 18 November orders of the South Viet-Nam People's Liberation Armed Forces Command.

(2) On the days specified in the Front's communique and the command's order, the Liberation Armed Forces must find ways to help the people organise their traditional activities and conduct the religious rituals in a safe and joyful

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manner and to help the soldiers of the puppet administration who want to return to their native places to visit their families, in compliance with the stipulations contained in the South Viet-Nam People's Liberation Armed Forces Command's order.

(3) The Americans and puppets used to sabotage the order on the cessation of military attacks by resorting to the following tricks: Sending aircraft to conduct reconnaissance and to recklessly bomb and strafe the liberated areas; directing artillery fire from their positions at our people's areas; conducting military operations on the days on which military acts are ceased with a view to reoccupying a number of liberated areas in order to harass our people; and sending small armed units to carry out provocative actions with a view to harassing our people living in areas surrounding their positions.

All these acts must be regarded as violations of the Front's order on the cessation of military attacks and must be punished. Therefore, all the Liberation Armed Forces must maintain a high vigilance and must be prepared to appropriately punish these acts of sabotage of the enemy. All command levels should pay attention to fully carrying out these instructions in order to satisfactorily implement the Front's humanitarian policy and to effectively protect our people on the above holidays." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 13 (Canberra: GPO, 1968), pp. 32-33.)*

18 December-- In a television interview taped on this date, President Johnson describes "a fair solution" to the Vietnam War, as follows: "The demilitarized zone must be respected as the 1954 Agreements require. The unity of Viet-Nam as a whole must be a matter for peaceful adjustment and negotiation. The North Vietnamese forces must get out of Laos and stop infiltrating Laos. That is what the 1962 Agreement required, and it must be respected. The overwhelming majority of the people of South Viet-Nam want a one-man-one-vote constitutional government... President Thieu has said that the South Vietnamese Government is not prepared to recognize the NLF as a government, and it knows well that NLF's control is by Hanoi. And so do we. But he also has said that he is prepared for informal talks with members of the NLF, and these could bring good results. I think that is a statesmanlike position. And I hope the other side will respond...The political future of South Viet-Nam... must be worked out in South Viet-Nam by the people of South Vietnam. It is our judgment that this war could be ended in a matter of weeks if the other side would face these five simple facts and if some of our own people here in this country would

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encourage that that be done instead of broadcasting alarms that may give false signals both to Hanoi and to the Viet Cong." With regard to the bombing, President Johnson holds that the San Antonio Formula must apply. *(Department of State Bulletin, vol 58, pp. 33-34.)*

19 December-- The Soviet leaders send a message of support to the NLF Central Committee expressing their confidence that the new Front programme "will facilitate a still closer unity of the people of the country against the American aggressors and their Saigon puppets." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 13 (Canberra: GPO, 1968), pp. 134-35.)*

19 December-- Mao Tse-tung sends a message of congratulations to the NLF Central Committee on the 7th anniversary of the Front's founding. His assessment of the success of the war and its future course is notably restrained, perhaps even pessimistic. He claims only that the guerrillas have "landed...[US imperialism] in an impass. This is a great victory." Moreover, although the "days of the US aggressors in Viet-Nam are numbered...all reactionary forces on the verge of extinction invariably conduct desperate struggles. They are bound to resort to military adventure and political deception in all their forms in order to save themselves from extinction. And the revolutionary people are bound to meet with all kinds of difficulties before final victory. Nevertheless, these difficulties can all be surmounted and no difficulty can ever obstruct the advance of the revolutionary people. Perseverance means victory. I am deeply convinced that by persevering in protracted war the Vietnamese people will surely drive the US aggressors out of their country." *(Department of External Affairs, Australian Government, Select Documents on International Affairs—Vietnam, no. 13 (Canberra: GPO, 1968), pp. 135-36.)*

21 December-- After a meeting in Canberra, Australia, President Johnson and President Nguyen Van Thieu issue a communique reaffirming the basic principles of the Manila communique of October 1966. Since there is no sign that Hanoi is ready to take any of the avenues to peace that have been opened, they agree that the only alternative is to continue appropriate military actions. President Johnson proclaims the intent of the United States to continue supporting the policy of national reconciliation: "President Thieu once again explained his Government's policy of reconciliation enunciated at Honolulu in February, 1966. In the light of the elections which subsequently have taken place, he noted that the Government of Vietnam is now prepared to grant full rights of citizenship to those now fighting against the Government who are prepared to accept the constitutional processes and to live at peace under the constitutionally elected Government. President Thieu likewise reaffirmed a willingness

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to discuss relevant matters with any individuals now associated with the so-called National Liberation Front while making clear that his Government could not regard the front as an independent organization in any sense. He noted that it was not useful to attempt constructive discussions with any elements in South Vietnam committed to violent methods to obtain their political ends." *(New York Times, 22 December 1967.)*

28 December-- Norodom Sihanouk, in an interview for the Washington Post, maintains that there are no North Vietnamese or VC bases on Cambodian soil. He acknowledges, however, that "small Vietnamese resistance units" have entered his country "a number of times" but were expelled "a few hours later under the order of Cambodian officers." *(New York Times, 29 December 1967, pp. 1 and 2.)*

29 December-- Nguyen Duy Trinh, Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister of the DRV, states with regard to peace negotiations: "The position of the Vietnamese people is very clear. It is the four points of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the political program of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam. This is the basis for the whole solution of the Vietnamese problem." He adds: "The United States Government does not cease to repeat that it wants to converse with Hanoi but that Hanoi does not react by making any sign. If the Government of the United States really wants the talks, as our statement of January 28, 1967, clearly said, it should first cease unconditionally the bombing and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. After the unconditional halt of bombings and any other American act of war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam will hold conversations with the United States on relevant problems." This declaration appears to be significant since the previous wording "would hold conversations" has been replaced by "will hold conversations." In a television interview in Paris, moreover, Mai Van Bo, the chief North Vietnamese representative in Western Europe, says that the "conversations will begin after a suitable time following upon the unconditional cessation of the bombing and of all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam." He states, however, that the San Antonio Formula is untenable. *(New York Times, 18 January 1968.)*

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1 January-- A New Year's editorial in Hanoi's Nhan Dan claims that North Vietnam has become stronger in spite of US bombing and the step-up of the war. It states that "our communications lines remain open as ever" in the face of the bombing and asserts that "the political and moral unity of our people has

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strengthened." This same day, Ho Chi Minh issues his New Year's message urging both the North and South Vietnamese people to fight on and emulate each other in combatting the Americans. No reference is made in either statement to the possibility of negotiations or a peaceful resolution of the conflict. In a related development, the DRV also issues a special statement warning that its people "are ready to do everything they can" to resist any possible US intrusion into Cambodia. *(New York Times, 2 January 1968, p. 6.)*

3 January-- In comments that are subsequently released as an official statement, Cambodian Prime Minister Norodom Sihanouk reveals that he has opposition in his cabinet to his decision to permit US troops to cross the border of Cambodia in hot pursuit of Vietnamese Communist forces fleeing South Vietnam. He says that "Red French" members of his cabinet insist that it is absolutely necessary for Cambodian troops to fight back but that he does not want his countrymen to be killed. He does not want to invite American troops in South Vietnam to cross Cambodia's border, and he asserts that his country will fight if US troops seize Cambodian territory and refuse to surrender it. *(Chicago Tribune, 4 January 1968, p. 1.)*

4 January-- In a news conference, Secretary of State Rusk reveals that the Administration is trying to determine the precise meaning of the recent statement by North Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh, but that the United States still holds to the San Antonio Formula. He states: "...we are ready for a Geneva Conference on Cambodia, on Laos, on South Viet-Nam, North Viet-Nam, on any part of the Southeast Asian problem or all of it. And that has been our position for a long time, as you know." He notes that some of the North Vietnamese attacks in Laos "seem to be seasonal in character" but that "[o]ur friends in Laos feel that it is somewhat more than seasonal... We have noticed continued movements through Laos and the use of the Ho Chi Minh Trail, and operations seem to be associated with that...We would be very glad to see the Geneva machinery moved promptly to bring about a 1,000-percent compliance with the Laos Accords of 1962 by all parties. And that would be a giant step toward peace in Southeast Asia." *(Department of State Bulletin, vol 58, pp. 116-24.)*

4 January-- The Soviet Government newspaper Izvestia charges that the US is planning to send troops into Cambodia and Laos as part of a broad strategy of entrenchment on the Asian continent. The writer adds: "In these conditions, 'peace-making' maneuvers of the United States ruling circles have no value whatsoever if they do not take into account, first of all, an unreserved and unconditional halt of the bombing attacks and all other military actions against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam." *(New York Times, 5 January 1968, p. 12.)*

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4 January-- The Cambodian Government accepts 11 planes and several dozen antiaircraft guns from Communist China, including three MIG-17 jet fighters, four training planes and four single-engine transports. Cambodian Premier Son Sann, in accepting the aid, says: "The important military aid that our friend China gives us has a great significance in the present circumstances. We see growing continuously the threat of American intervention against our independence, our neutrality and our territorial integrity, and it is not impossible that in the weeks or months to come, we will have to mobilize all our energies to resist the aggressor." *(New York Times, 5 January 1968, p. 6.)*

4-5 January-- On 4 January, Moscow protests that the Soviet motor vessel "Pereyaslavl-Zalesskiy" has been damaged this day by a bomb explosion during the course of an attack by US aircraft. The following day, a US Government note is delivered to the Soviet Ambassador in reply to the charge. It says that initial investigation on the part of the United States is inconclusive and observes: "If any damage to international shipping in the Haiphong area was produced by ordance dropped by United States aircraft, it was inadvertent and is regretted by the United States Government, which will continue to take careful precautions to avoid damage to non-hostile shipping. Unfortunately, it is impossible to eliminate completely the risk that foreign vessels entering or remaining in an area of active hostilities may sustain unintentional damage as a result of actions by one or the other side." *(Department of State Bulletin, vol 58, p. 145.)*

11 January-- After a meeting with Secretary Rusk, British Foreign Secretary George Brown says that he shares Washington's confusion over how to interpret the statement made by DRV Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh. "There is clearly a part of that speech which looks as though the Hanoi Government has made a significant move and wants talks to start. There are other parts that are not so encouraging. It is essential that a probe is carried out and that we make sure and clear" what North Vietnam means. *(Philadelphia Inquirer, 12 January 1968, p. 1.)*

11 January-- The North Vietnamese press agency reports that DRV Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh has pledged that his country will help defend Cambodia in the event of an American attack. Trinh, at a recent reception for visiting Cambodian Foreign Minister Norodom Phourissara, promised that the DRV would respect Cambodia's present frontiers. If the United States starts "reckless aggression" against Cambodia, he declared, the Vietnamese people are ready to respond positively to any request by that country to help defend her independence, neutrality and territorial integrity. *(New York Times, 12 January 1968, pp. 1 and 10.)*

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12 January-- A joint communique is issued in Phnom Penh describing the talks, held from 5-12 January, between Cambodian officials and US special envoy Chester Bowles. Considerable progress had apparently been made in those meetings, for the Royal Government states that it is "prepared to confirm anew to the International Control Commission that it still favors the strengthening of that organization so that it may be able, within the framework of its competence as defined by the Geneva Agreements of 1954, to investigate, confirm, and report all incidents as well as all foreign infiltrations on Cambodian territory." The US, for its part, emphasizes that it has no desire or intention to violate Cambodian territory. Commenting on this agreement, Assistant Secretary of State William P. Bundy says in Washington that Ambassador Bowles has emphasized to Sihanouk that the United States maintains the right of "self-defense", including the right to pursue Communist troops who may be launching attacks from Cambodian soil. Cambodian officials subsequently declare that Bundy's remarks are unfortunate and do much to undermine the good will created by the Bowles mission. *(Department of State Bulletin, vol 58, pp. 133-34; Washington Post, 14 January 1968, p. 1.)*

17 January-- President Johnson in his State of the Union message to Congress, reasserts the validity of the San Antonio Formula, but he rephrases it as follows: "The bombing would stop if talks would take place promptly and with reasonable hope that they would be productive. And the other side must not take advantage of our restraint as they have in the past. This nation simply cannot accept anything less without jeopardizing the lives of our men and of our allies. If a basis for peace talks can be established on the San Antonio foundations...we would consult with our allies and with the other side to see if a complete cessation of hostilities--a really true cease-fire--could be made the first order of business." *(New York Times, 18 January 1968, p. 1.)*

18 January-- The Soviet Communist Party newspaper Pravda notes that North Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh has "clarified the position of the D.R.V. government with respect to the resolution of the Vietnam question. He declared that the Democratic Republic of Vietnam will talk with the United States on questions of mutual interest after the U.S.A. stops, without any conditions, its bombing raids and other military operations against the D.R.V." *(Viktor Sharapov, "Clear Answer of the D.R.V.", trans. DES, Pravda, 18 January 1967, p. 5.)*

19 January-- The DRV denies charges by the United States and the Royal Laotian Government that North Vietnamese troops are in Laos. *(New York Times, 20 January 1968, p. 2.)*

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19 January-- The Soviet news agency Tass reveals that Moscow has sent a note to Washington "several days ago" accusing the United States of planning to expand the Vietnam War into Cambodia and Laos: "The war unleashed by the United States in Vietnam, the American Government's present course of further intensifying and expanding the scale of this war, is the source of...tension in the area." The US State Department confirms that the protest has been received and says that Ambassador W. Averell Harriman has asked Moscow whether the Soviet Union had thought of protesting to North Vietnam against the violations of Cambodian territory. *(Washington Post, 19 January 1968, p. 1.)*

20 January-- The New China news agency, commenting on President Johnson's state of the union message, declares (quoting Chairman Mao): "Irreconcilable domestic and international contradictions, like a volcano, menace U.S. imperialism every day. U.S. imperialism is sitting on this volcano." *(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 5, 29 January 1967, pp. 23-24.)*

January-- British authority P. J. Honey comments on the flurry of Communist peace-feelers during this period: "In January, 1968, ...when N. Vietnam and the Viet Cong declared their intention to honour a Tet Nguyen Dan truce and when foreign minister Nguyen Duy Trinh made his public offer to hold peace talks when American bombing was stopped, the plan for the offensive and its timing was perfectly well known to all of the spokesmen. Indeed, preparations on the ground were in their final stages. Nguyen Duy Trinh himself, therefore, and those Soviet leaders who gave solemn assurances of the sincerity of his offer to negotiate, lied quite deliberately in order to secure surprise for the Viet Cong assault troops and bring about a halt in American bombing so that supplies might more easily be transported to S. Vietnam. N. Vietnamese representatives overseas and those pro-communist western journalists who had recently been in N. Vietnam, almost certainly knew nothing of the plans when they insisted that Nguyen Duy Trinh genuinely wanted peace talks." *(P. J. Honey, "The Offensive: Hanoi's Change of Strategy", China News Analysis, no. 701, 22 March 1968, p. 7.)*

25 January-- The New York Times reports that disagreements have kept the International Control Commission from filing reports to the Geneva co-chairmen for nearly two years. The Polish delegate has refused to take part in investigations of Laotian Government charges that North Vietnamese units are fighting alongside the Pathet Lao. Moreover, the Soviets will not accept reports signed by only Canada and India, and the Pathet Lao have not allowed the ICC's helicopters to land in the one-third of the Laotian territory that they control. Finally, China and the DRV refuse to pay their share of the Commission's expenses, leaving it with an operating deficit of nearly 20 percent. *(New York Times, 26 January 1968, p. 15.)*

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27 January - 9 February-- Norodom Sihanouk accuses the Cambodian Communists of setting off a "real civil war against the national regime" in the Battambang region of northwestern Cambodia. The Chief of State adds that the Communists "are supplied from Thailand, probably in collusion with the Thailand Patriotic Front directed by Peking." The Cambodian Reds are working with the Thais "in order not to compromise too much the Vietminh and Vietcong who need me." By 9 February, however, Sihanouk announces that the revolts in Battambang and Rattanakiri Provinces (the former bordering Thailand, the latter bordering South Vietnam) have been subdued. *(New York Times, 28 January and 10 February 1968, pp. 23 and 12 respectively.)*

30 January-- The New York Times reports that the "United States has directly informed North Vietnam that it would be willing to stop bombing North Vietnamese territory and talk peace if Hanoi did not take advantage of this move to raise infiltration of men and supplies to South Vietnam beyond 'normal' levels...But they emphasized that Washington would tolerate neither an intensified resupply effort from North to South Vietnam nor halt the bombing in the face of a major build-up of North Vietnamese forces in the South...[T]he State Department, through its spokesman, asserted that the terms recently proposed to Hanoi were consistent with Mr. Johnson's position as voiced at San Antonio. In what has become known as the San Antonio formula, he offered to halt air and naval bombardment of North Vietnam 'when this will lead promptly to productive discussion' and on the assumption that Hanoi would 'not take advantage' of the bombing suspension." *(Harry S. Ashmore and Willian C. Baggs, Mission to Hanoi (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), pp. 343-44.)*

30 January-- The NLF issues an "appeal to the armed forces and people" charging rampant US violations of the Tet truce. "Faced with this situation, the Presidium of the Front Central Committee orders all the People's Liberation Armed Forces, the forces engaged in political struggle and all members of the associations for national salvation affiliated to the Front, together with other patriotic forces and the people as a whole, to stand up as one man, determined to duly punish the U.S. aggressors and the Thieu-Ky clique of traitors." *(South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation, Documents (South Vietnam: Giai Phong Publishing House, 1968), pp. 89-90.)*

31 January et seq.-- Patrick J. McGarvey of the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace analyses, in his book Visions of Victory, the Tet Offensive. He says: "Toward the end of the 1966-67 dry season, Giap set out to devise a method of achieving both his high-priority military objectives and also the two political objectives of destroying the Saigon government's authority and the pacification program. Concerned with the size

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and firepower of American units, he experimented with ways of neutralizing their effectiveness. He initiated a frontal assault in the DMZ with the movement of a division into the Con Thien area. Continued pressure and ground probes around the position brought a sizable American reaction; Marine units were pulled out of the coastal areas of I Corps, and the pacification program there suffered accordingly. In this test case, Giap probed, we reacted, and pacification suffered.

Giap appears to have planned his 1967-68 dry-season campaign on the basis of this single test and the critical estimate that American troop levels would not exceed those publicly announced by United States officials. Unwilling to commit his entire force structure to a campaign plan that had been tested only once, Giap tested his hypothesis again at the opening of the dry season in October. In the battles of Dak To and Loc Ninh in the Central Highlands, he saw the United States once again react in force to large concentrations of Communist troops. The frontal assaults on these strong points, which seemed so senseless, now appear to have been a deliberate effort by Giap to see how his forces would fare against a heavily defended American position. He learned that the cost of such assaults was great. Apparently reassured by the results of the Highlands campaign of October and November and aware of the planning under way for the Tet Offensive in the cities, Giap gave the go-ahead for the next phase—the Khe Sanh campaign. In December and early January, he maneuvered his forces into the western end of the DMZ. As the plans for the Tet Offensive neared completion the stage was set, and Giap moved in on Khe Sanh, probing with infantry and launching mortar and rocket attacks to lend credibility to the threat. We reacted in force once more; Giap launched his Tet Offensive.

As Saigon slept through the first night of the Lunar New Year holiday, the Viet Cong maneuvered into position. Between 2 and 3 A.M., a well-drilled squad of the C-10 Sapper Battalion awaited the order to jump off. This came shortly before 3 A.M., as a Citroen motored quietly past the American Embassy. From the front seat of the black sedan the order came, and the squad launched their attack, blowing a hole in the Embassy wall and entering the grounds, where they would remain for the next six hours. Elsewhere in the city similar scenes were taking place. A force of some twenty guerrillas stormed the Saigon Radio Station, remaining there until driven off by a fire set by ARVN troops. Another group stormed the nearby Presidential Palace grounds. On the outskirts of the capital a heavy mortar and rocket barrage rained down on Ton San Nhut Airbase, and commando units penetrated the perimeter and initiated a series of firefights with United States and ARVN troops. An estimated five battalions, some 2,000-2,500 guerrillas, took part in the attack. After the first

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hours and days of chaos, they gravitated to Cholon, the Chinese section of Saigon, where they dug in for a long fight. Their propaganda cadres immediately set to work. Two were picked up by policemen in downtown Saigon as they stopped cars and handed out leaflets. Others with loudspeakers informed the population that the 'total revolution' was under way and advised them to join in. In other cities from the Mekong Delta to the DMZ, similar scenes were being enacted. In all, 26 of the 44 provincial capitals came under siege, with varying results. In Hue, five Communist battalions managed to remain for weeks. Da Nang Airbase in the north came under fierce rocket and mortar assaults. Government and ARVN military headquarters were attacked also.

Many wondered if the series of lightning raids represented a renunciation of the strategy of protracted war. On the surface it might appear to. Giap, however, has never said that the strategy of protracted war requires a specific set of tactics. What he has said is that all types of forces would be used, and that a variety of tactics would be blended to accord with the 'realities of the local situation.' The 'coordinated' and 'independent' methods of fighting reflect his tactical versatility. He did not scrap the principle of protracted war in launching the Tet Offensive; rather, with characteristic originality, he intensified the military pressure in South Vietnam according to a scenario and timetable of his own choosing. One comment from Hanoi on February 11 described the raids on the cities as having compressed twenty years of fighting into one day..., a remark implying that the Tet Offensive was designed to speed up the timetable for ultimate victory. It does not imply, however, that the Offensive itself was designed to bring that final victory about. Captured enemy documents confront this question directly. The Communists' Central Office of South Vietnam, in a situation report issued on the first day of the Tet Offensive...reminded all subordinates that they were still fighting a protracted war. After the smoke of the Tet Offensive had cleared, the Communists reassessed their position; they concluded, among other things, that they had to continue to be prepared for protracted war...

Whatever the precise short-term objectives of the Tet Offensive may have been, it was almost certainly designed to precipitate the next stage of the war, that of fighting and talking simultaneously. It is from this perspective that we must judge Giap's statement that the fighting may continue for 'five, ten, or twenty' more years. The North Vietnamese see a long road ahead before ultimate victory, by which they mean the reunification of North and South Vietnam under Communist rule. The immediate strategic problem facing Hanoi was to create the military, political, and psychological conditions conducive to the opening of negotiations with the United States. The Tet

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Offensive was clearly designed to create such conditions. The concerted diplomatic offensive launched by Hanoi in concert with the waning of the first Tet onslaught also pointed to their desire to open negotiations. Whatever the outcome of these negotiations, a minimum acceptable position for Hanoi would appear to be some influence and presence in the government of South Vietnam. Beyond that, Hanoi may hope to acquire the two northernmost provinces of South Vietnam or some other South Vietnamese territory. Having achieved a reasonably satisfactory interim solution, the North Vietnamese could shift once more to the quiet political battlefield, initiating actions similar to those they undertook in 1955-56, when the reunification elections were blocked by Ngo Dinh Diem. This, then, is what Giap means when he speaks of a protracted war of 'five, ten, or twenty' years. His perspective is not limited to the present battlefield or the American presence. It is focused on the ultimate goal of unifying North and South Vietnam under Communist rule—a goal that could well take twenty years to reach.

As the military offensive got under way, the Viet Cong unfolded a carefully coordinated psychological offensive, designed primarily to plant the notion of an alternative political solution in the minds of the South Vietnamese. In broadcasts from Liberation Radio and Radio Hanoi, the Communists repeatedly asserted that the government of South Vietnam was crumbling, and urged their listeners to either join the revolt against the government or remain neutrals. In the first hours of the offensive, the widespread attacks were described as punishment for the Allies' revocation of the Tet ceasefire—a move designed, no doubt, to impress the populace with the Viet Cong's ability to react rapidly throughout the country to the alleged violation of the traditional holiday. These reports were followed by wildly exaggerated claims of Viet Cong victories throughout the country, and were buttressed by charges that American and South Vietnamese forces were conducting wanton attacks on innocent civilians. The Allies were reported to be indiscriminately using 'poison gases,' artillery, bombs, rockets, and napalm. The Communist broadcasts claimed that entire ARVN units were deserting and joining the ranks of the Viet Cong; that 'Revolutionary Armed Forces' were springing up in the cities; and, finally, that anyone who took part in the trial or punishment of captured Viet Cong soldiers would be subject to harsh reprisals. In essence, the psychological warfare efforts of the Viet Cong during the first two days of the offensive were intended to terrify the population, aggravate the chaos in the streets, and soften up the population for the next onslaught. Their efforts were supported by attacks on South Vietnamese radio stations that took them off the air during the first few hours of the offensive.

Carrying their claims of widespread victories a step further, the Communist radios on February 1 began to disseminate the myth that

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a new kind of political grouping, the 'Alliances,' had sprung up over night in areas seized by the Viet Cong. They were described as non-Communist coalitions of all those segments of South Vietnamese society who yearned for peace and national identification. In Saigon, a representative of Liberation Radio reported that the 'Alliance of National and Peace Forces' had arisen and had issued a declaration of national salvation, which called for the people to overthrow the Thieu-Ky government. On the same day the Communists publicized the establishment of the 'National, Democratic, and Peace Alliance' of Hue; a professor from the University of Hue allegedly had issued an appeal to all 'patriots, youth, women, and students' to join the uprising, overthrow the government, and 'struggle for the establishment of a national coalition administration.' Coalition with the National Liberation Front was the essential theme of the entire campaign. The polulation, it was hoped, would believe they were being offered a political mechanism that was neither the Saigon regime nor the Viet Cong. The Vietnamese Communists made similar use of front groups during the French war.

The next phase of the psychological assault entailed spreading the notion that a revolutionary administration was filling the vacuum left by the destruction of the Saigon government. Communist radios claimed such administrative bodies had sprung up in Saigon and 'other liberated areas.' Communiqués called for the establishment of 'people's revolutionary administrations' throughout the country to return control of South Vietnam to the people.

Next there appeared the 'Golden Opportunity' theme. This was designed to give everyone in South Vietnam a chance to commit himself to the revolution to the extent that accorded with his individual abilities and nerve. An appeal issued by Nguyen Huu Tho, the head of the National Liberation Front, called on ARVN soldiers to turn their guns on the Americans. If they were unwilling to do that, they could turn their weapons over to the Viet Cong and be allowed to return to their home village or join the Viet Cong in a noncombatant's role. The families of ARVN troops were called upon to urge their sons, brothers, husbands, or fathers in uniform to consider these opportunities. Civilian administrators and functionaires of the Saigon government were asked what they thought of American military power now, and were reminded that American money and equipment alone could not defeat the revolution. They were implored simply to walk away from their jobs. On February 3, Hanoi issued a 'Ten Point Policy' of rewards reinforcing the 'Golden Opportunity' theme in all its variations. All ARVN units who deserted en masse would be rewarded, and their commanders given positions of responsibility in the Viet Cong. Anti-regime

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politicians would be welcomed and given leading roles in the 'Alliances.' Neutralists would be welcomed, too, and asked only to consider seriously the Viet Cong's case. Anyone who pointed out a government agent or functionary or who turned over to the Viet Cong stolen government documents would be welcomed and rewarded. Deserters from ARVN units would be allowed to return to their families and their personal property and freedom would be guaranteed. All ARVN troops who surrendered or were captured would be well treated. Troops in the field were urged to turn their weapons over to the Viet Cong or merely walk away into the bush, where they would be rewarded by the Viet Cong. Civil servants who turned over documents or destroyed files would be rewarded. Dependents of ARVN or government personnel would be well treated if they urged their husbands, fathers, and sons to join the revolution, and those who succeeded in persuading their men to join would be rewarded.

While maintaining that victory was at hand, the Communists held out the possibility that the first offensive would fail. Late February 1, they said the enemy was 'still very stubborn.' On February 4 a congratulatory message from Ho Chi Minh acclaimed the 'new and favorable' situation, but warned that 'the closer we come to victory, the more hardships we shall have to undergo.' As the first wave of fighting waned, Communist propaganda began to emphasize that the Tet Offensive was but the first in a series of actions that would bring final victory.

In assessing the role of the Tet Offensive and what it implies for the future, it is important to appreciate how the Communists viewed it, an extremely difficult task because of the sheer volume of propaganda included in the first phase of the campaign. From all this propaganda, however, one can glean some insights into what the Communists hoped to achieve militarily and politically by their offensive, and how they assessed the results of their efforts.

Perhaps the clearest point to emerge is that the Communists were not discouraged by the initial results. Their dramatic move refocused world attention on the Vietnam War and increased their worldwide stature, and it created staggering social and economic problems for the Saigon government, problems that require rapid solution. The Communists did not achieve victory in one fell swoop, but this does not appear to have been their intention.

The anonymous but authoritative author of one of the least bombastic commentaries to emerge so far..., which was broadcast from Hanoi on February 11 and appeared in the North Vietnamese Army Daily the same day, made two main points. First,

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the massive Communist ground-force build-up near Khe Sanh was a diversion for the raids on the cities, and the primary targets of the Tet Offensive were the Saigon government's apparatus and the pacification program. Surprise and deception were the key elements of the Communists' strategy. 'The Americans were surprised strategically,' the author wrote, 'surprised as to the time and the place where they were attacked.' 'The U.S. aggressors expected attacks on the northern [Khe Sanh] area, as predicted by U.S. generals, but they did not expect attacks on almost every city and important base—the areas the U.S.-puppet troops firmly believe they absolutely control.' The author did not imply that attacks would not occur at Khe Sanh or other DMZ bases; he boasted, rather, that they would attack when the time was ripe. The Viet Cong, he said, 'are fully capable of limiting or eliminating the temporary strong points that the Americans have relied on to wage the war.'

The cities were chosen as the major targets for the offensive, the author revealed, because they were the weakest points in the American-South Vietnamese alliance: 'It is obvious that the cities are not only crucial places, but also places where the enemy has many weaknesses and where the U.S.-puppet rule is centered.' He mocked the efforts of the Saigon government to restore order and convene a session of the National Assembly 'with loudspeakers'—a session that 'only one-third of the congressmen attended.' He hinted at the fate meted out to the rural representatives of the Saigon government: 'The political structure of the new colonialism has disintegrated not only in the hamlets and villages under [the Allies'] temporary control, but also at the provincial, district, and central levels. The control machinery in hamlets and villages, including almost 50,000 pacification cadres, has been destroyed, or has disintegrated as a result of complete neglect during the troublesome days in the cities.'

From the Vietnamese Communists' statements and the public acclaim they received in other Communist countries, and in non-Communist countries as well, it appears that the Viet Cong believe they met their minimum objectives with their first onslaught, and that encouraged by their relative success, they will maintain their pressure at various points.

Their success in discrediting the Saigon administration cannot be fully measured at this time, but it seems likely that they will continue to attempt to overwhelm reconstruction efforts by forcing refugees into population centers and encouraging them to demand every conceivable form of social welfare. In the meantime they will no doubt expend much effort to eliminate all vestiges of government authority in the countryside by assassination and terror, a move facilitated by ARVN's preoccupation

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with the defense of urban areas. The option of further major assaults on urban areas is also open to them. In the political sphere, the Communists probably will continue to push the Alliance idea. Political commissars are no doubt screening local populations for suitable persons to head these groups, much as they did in 1959-60, when the National Liberation Front was formed. The orchestration of these options depends on the Communists' assessment of their own capabilities and manpower resources. They may hope to achieve their ultimate goal, to destroy the American and South Vietnamese will to persist, by precipitating so severe a political crisis in Saigon that the United States and other Allied nations would be left in a politically untenable position, i.e., would be left defending a government that had ceased to exist.

If we bear in mind the fact that the Tet Offensive was planned as early as the summer of 1967, the December 29, 1967, statement of North Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh, to the effect that Hanoi 'will' begin negotiations, takes on an added dimension. Hanoi apparently hoped to draw the United States to the conference table in early January, and as the sessions were getting under way, present the world with the dramatic Tet assault—a Dien Bien Phu of sorts, which would place the United States in the weakest possible bargaining position. Hanoi seems convinced that President Johnson's March 31 decision to reduce the extent of American bombing and open negotiations resulted primarily from their Tet Offensive. Broadcasts from Hanoi since early April have stressed the theme of the United State's inability to extricate itself from the mire of Vietnam by military force. The same assurance is reflected in the particularly rigid public stance of the North Vietnamese delegation in Paris and in the apparent military confidence of the Communist forces in South Vietnam, who defiantly launched a second offensive in early May as the talks were opening. No one can predict what the future holds for South Vietnam, but it can be predicted that the Communists' military tactics—whether they be countrywide offensives or acts of restraint—will be subordinated to the political goals of destroying the government of South Vietnam, bringing about an American withdrawal, and reunifying North and South Vietnam under Communist auspices." *(Patrick J. McGarvey, Visions of Victory (Stanford: Stanford University, 1969), pp. 48-55.)*

31 January et seq.-- The period of the Tet Offensive saw the formation of the Alliance of National and Democratic Peace Forces of Vietnam. Initially, these Alliances were urban-based, in Hue, Saigon, DaNang, Nha Trang, and briefly in Dalat. The first public references to them occurred in the Hue area on 31 January; they were noted by Hanoi's Nhan Dan on 2 February. The Alliance in Hue distributed leaflets during the first week in February, announcing that it stood for: "(1) the

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overthrow of the Thieu government; (2) regaining national sovereignty, ending this unjust war and forcing withdrawal of all U.S. and satellite troops; (3) restoration of peace and building of an independent, democratic, peaceful and neutral South Vietnam; and (4) negotiation with the NLF to achieve these objectives." Douglas Pike, in his study War, Peace, and the Viet Cong, notes that "[i]n the rural areas the Alliance idea, as originally conceived, was a lesser part of the Revolutionary Council arrangement—a sort of village- and district-level negotiational front group. When the seizure of power failed, the leadership was faced with the choice of either quietly disbanding the Alliance system or turning it into new channels. It chose the latter and assigned the Alliance new tasks, both external and internal. The external task was to offer itself to the world as the 'third force' in Vietnam, standing somewhere between the NLF-PRP power contenders and those in Saigon. The internal task was to upgrade itself and secure a political foothold; in the cities this, at best, would be tenuous and, of necessity, deeply covert; in the rural areas it involved incorporating the Revolutionary Council idea, not for administrative reasons but in an effort to develop a political base for the Alliance and prevent it from being dismissed by the world simply as another Vietnamese political tendency—with nothing to offer beyond its good offices. Hence, the Alliance increasingly sought to portray itself as an important, authentic, non-Communist, political force in South Vietnam with its own followers, its own programs, and its own political power..." *(Douglas Pike, War, Peace, and the Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969), pp. 20-21.)*

1 February-- On this date, the Central Office of South Vietnam (COSVN) Current Affairs Committee and the Military Affairs Committee of the South Vietnam Liberation Army (SVNLA) Headquarters issue a circular offering a preliminary assessment of the Tet Offensive. It declares:

"1. We have launched simultaneous and timely attacks on almost all towns and cities, district seats, sectors and [enemy] military bases as planned. Generally speaking, the attacks were fruitful at the outset. In areas where the offensive and uprising were closely coordinated, or where the three-pronged attacks in mountainous and lowland areas were comparatively coordinated, the attacks were more successful. Within a short period of time we succeeded in paralyzing the puppet government administration from central to local echelons, and confusing the U.S. command channels. We succeeded in wearing down and destroying an important enemy force, many headquarters of the puppet troops, and a large quantity of war facilities. Timely and accurate fire

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was directed at main objectives. The attack was extremely fierce. The COSVN Current Affairs Committee and the Military Affairs Committee of the SVNLA Headquarters considered this achievement a very great one. This first achievement has an extremely momentous significance. It gains revolutionary pride for the masses and places us in a position to advance and score greater achievements in both the military and the political field. It enables us to make greater efforts to continue attacking and to be resolute in our determination to win final victory. We have struck the enemy accurately and successfully. The Current Affairs Committee and the Military Affairs Committee of the SVNLA Headquarters warmly cite and commend all cadre, party and group members of all echelons, both inside and outside the army, and all cadres and troops within the armed forces.

However, we still have the following shortcomings and weaknesses: We failed to seize a number of primary objectives and to completely destroy mobile and defensive units of the enemy. We also failed to hold the occupied areas. In the political field, we failed to motivate the people to stage uprisings and break the enemy's oppressive control. In cities as well as in rural areas and areas temporarily occupied by the enemy, the troop-proselyting activities of the masses were not conducted on a broad front, and propaganda work was not carried out soon enough or continuously enough. Signal liaison and reporting in some areas, especially the signal liaison and command in charge of the immediate objectives of the SVNLA Headquarters and regions, were extremely slow and not closely coordinated, and so forth.

2. The enemy: Although he had taken precautionary measures, he was surprised strategically and suffered heavy losses in strength and equipment. The puppet's command agencies, installations, and central government administration were paralyzed. His troops were driven into disorder. The U.S. troops were put on the defensive. They became confused and demoralized. However, since we did not succeed in completely destroying many of his mobile and defensive units at the very start, or closely coordinate the offensive with uprisings and troop proselyting, the enemy continued to resist and his units were not completely broken up. If in the coming days we fail to quickly motivate a large and powerful force of the masses to stand up against the enemy in time, and if we fail to concentrate our armed forces to attack him continuously, he will certainly recover his strength and counterattack us more strongly. Not only will this limit the impact of our victories, it will create new difficulties for us.

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3. In accordance with the Resolution of the Politburo and the development of the situation during the past two days, the COSVN Current Affairs Committee and the Military Affairs Committee of the Liberation Army Headquarters would like to call the attention of the Region [Party] Committees, Military Region [Party] Committee and Party Committee agencies to the following basic problems:

   a. It is imperative to be fully aware of the fact that the general offensive and general uprising, which are directed against an enemy with an army of more than 1,200,000 stubborn, reactionary, and well-equipped soldiers, is a prolonged strategic offensive that includes many military campaigns and local uprisings to break off all enemy counterattacks and that it is an extremely fierce struggle.

      Only when we succeed in destroying the entire puppet army and government, neutralizing the actual political and military support of the Americans, and wiping out a large portion of the U.S. and satellite forces, thus depriving them of all war facilities and crushing their attempted invasion, can we drive them to total defeat and achieve final victory. At present, the victories that we gained at the outset show that we are now powerful and the enemy is on the decline. Our fierce attacks are bringing him closer to the threat of bitter defeat. Consequently, we are fully able to successfully achieve our plan. However, while preparing and implementing this plan, we have been guilty of many errors and shortcomings, as mentioned above. We cannot yet, therefore, achieve total victory in a short period.

      Our cadres, armed forces, and people must be well-prepared, mentally, ideologically, and materially, to fight resolutely under all circumstances in order to win total victory. These preparations must be made during a period of three or four months, as mentioned in COSVN's directive to the Region Committees.

   b. It bears repeating that the concerned committees must thoroughly understand the guidelines of the general offensive and general uprising, outlined as follows: There must be coordination between the three-pronged [attack], the three strategic areas, the urban areas and the surrounding rural areas. In the city, the armed and political forces outside must work in close cooperation with the [revolutionary] forces inside. These forces must be coordinated with one another throughout the general battlefield and in the local area. Combat activities must always be accompanied

by the development and building up of forces. There must be close coordination of activities in the military, political, and diplomatic fields.

c. The concerned committees are required once again to fully understand the basic principle of the general offensive and general uprising, which is set forth as follows: concentrate the largest military and political forces in the most logical way; direct the fiercest attack against the major strategic objectives; resolutely conduct continuous attacks against the vulnerable points of the U.S. and puppet troops; and launch decisive attacks against key positions in order to gain decisive victories in areas where we must win. Work out methods of achieving victories minute by minute and hour by hour. Know how to enhance the impact of achieved victories and resolutely counter and break off the enemy's counter-attacks. Pursue the enemy to the end in order to maximize our gains.

4. In view of the basic problems mentioned above and the situation during the past three days, the COSVN Current Affairs Committee and the Military Affairs Committee of the Liberation Army Headquarters want to emphasize the following points, so that good results can be achieved by the committees concerned in the days to come:

a. We must continue to make everyone fully understand the policy, guidelines, and mission of the party. On this basis, we must incessantly heighten our determination to gain the greatest possible victory, permanently strengthen our will to fight the enemy continuously and to fight a protracted war. We must be able to foster and heighten the enthusiastic revolutionary spirit of the masses. We must resolutely overcome such weak points as flinching at difficulties, being hesitant in attacking the enemy, becoming puzzled before a complicated situation, or being overconfident about certain victories, and so forth. During this period, we must increase political work and build up a firm determination to accomplish important missions.

b. We must resolutely concentrate our forces on specific targets and rapidly take advantage of the victories we have just gained. We must continuously attack the enemy without allowing him to rest and to have time for reorganization. We must attack him repeatedly. (In some disputed areas, we must attack him three to four times, and not withdraw when we find it difficult to defeat him after the first attack.) We must be resolved to completely destroy all the major objectives that we have not yet been

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able to liquidate. We must destroy every mobile and organic unit of the puppet troops, closely pursue them, and use troop proselyting to rapidly disrupt every major puppet unit of regiment or division size. We must resolutely defend the objectives we have seized and be prepared to repel any enemy counterattack. With regard to U.S. troops, we should attack them if we have a well-prepared attack plan. When they counter-attack us, we must be determined to annihilate them. When they shrink back we must mainly use artillery, mortars, and sappers to attack them, surround them, and snipe at them in order to destroy them or wear them down. In order to avoid casualties, we must not use main-force units to attack them. At the same time, we must step up enemy-proselyting activities to neutralize and confuse them.

c. We must continuously destroy and repeatedly attack enemy bases, airfields, harbors, artillery positions, depots, and strategic communication lines to such a degree that the enemy can no longer use them.

d. The military offensive must be closely coordinated with the people's uprising. We must rapidly and resolutely motivate the people in towns and cities to take to the streets. We must arm the people and bring rural people into towns and cities, thus turning them into a growing political movement in order to break the oppressive control of the enemy in local areas and to overthrow the central puppet government. We must continue to pursue the enemy and completely destroy him, not allowing him to counterattack. We must step up the troop-proselyting movement of the people to the utmost in order to break up every major enemy unit and to incite military revolt among enemy troops. We must also intensify enemy-proselyting activities in all fields and with any facilities available.

e. To strengthen our firm proselyting in towns and cities, we must rapidly and widely motivate the local population to act in coordination with the offensive and uprising in towns and cities to sieze the entire rural area and the district capitals that still remain under the enemy's oppressive control.

f. We must rapidly motivate the people to rise up in conjunction with the military offensive to liberate densely populated areas along communication lines and to neutralize, completely destroy, and control important communication lines.

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g. Armed and political forces must be built up quickly. The greatest effort should be made to ensure that "the progress we make in one day is equal to that made in one year." The armed forces must be built up as fast as possible to solve the personnel problems in local areas. The number of cadres must be increased as quickly as the situation requires. Quickly strengthen the administrative organizations at the basic units, the people's political organizations, the party and group organizations, and so forth.

h. Take every opportunity to recruit as many civilian laborers as possible and successfully complete the activation of the transport branch and the units assigned the duty of transporting weapons and ammunition. Emphasis must be placed on immediate objectives to be sure that our troops can launch continuous counter-attacks. The party committees must assign a capable committee member to take charge of the above missions. Be sure that the policy dealing with the treatment of wounded and dead soldiers and the handling of U.S. and Republic of Vietnam prisoners of war is successfully carried out.

i. Successively step up propaganda activities to meet the requirements of the plan to motivate millions of people to hold demonstrations. Step up activities to meet the requirements of the troop-proselyting plan. Do our utmost to take over the government and protect it. Immediately spread the word of successive victories in the various areas. Heighten the victorious prestige of the people in large cities and be ready to respond to the second front when it is activated in Saigon. In other cities already occupied by us, we must establish an alliance of national and peace forces in local areas so that they can be combined when the central organization officially comes into being.

j. Be sure that newly liberated areas in the countryside and the cities are successfully consolidated. Quickly activate armed and political forces, form administrative organizations of different echelons, intensify defense and combat activities, have the people establish an air-defense system, and motivate the people to be ready for action against enemy counterattacks.

k. Make timely improvements in the methods of guidance and command. At present, we must concentrate the capabilities and resourcefulness of the masses on stabilizing the situation. They must fully understand our immediate

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objectives and regard our main and secondary objectives as indissolubly linked. Follow up on changes in the situation every minute, and disseminate our victories every moment. In all situations, especially in difficult ones, we must demonstrate persistence, preparedness, calmness, intelligence, and accuracy in our leadership activities. Work must be properly divided. Leadership must be thorough. Key missions must be fully understood and inflexibility must be avoided. Signal and liaison activities must be immediately improved to meet the requirements of reporting procedures, and especially to maintain contact with immediate objectives and between various regions and COSVN or the Military Affairs Committee so that directives can be given promptly and without interruption.

The Region Party Committees and Military Region Party Committees must make the various echelons fully aware of the above, work out a plan for future activities, devise a method of leadership, and submit reports to the COSVN Current Affairs Committee and the Military Affairs Committee of the Liberation Army Headquarters." *("Circular from Central Office of South Vietnam (COSVN) Current Affairs Committee and Military Affairs Committee of South Vietnam Liberation Army (SVNLA) Headquarters Concerning a Preliminary Assessment of the Situation", in Patrick J. McGarvey, Visions of Victory (Stanford: Stanford University, 1969), pp. 252-56.)*

2 February-- Chou En-lai sends a message of "warmest congratulations" to NLF President Nguyen Huu Tho for having scored "exceedingly brilliant victories" on the battlefield. The Tet victories "indicate that the south Vietnamese people's war against U.S. aggression and for national salvation has reached a new and higher level of development." However, he notes, the "days of the U.S. aggressors in Viet Nam are numbered; and this being so, they will no doubt put up an even more frenzied last-ditch fight...As our great leader Chairman Mao says, "perseverance means victory". We are deeply convinced that the heroic Vietnamese people will redouble their efforts, surmount all difficulties, press on valiantly, inflict thorough defeat on the U.S. aggressors and win final victory." *(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 6-7, 12 February 1968, p. 9.)*

2 February-- President Johnson discusses the Communist Tet Offensive with newsmen. He claims that the United States has known for some time that the offensive was planned by the enemy. He notes: "The biggest fact is that the stated purposes of the general uprising have failed. Communist leaders counted on popular support in the cities for their effort. They found little or none."

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He states that he has no hard evidence that the PUEBLO incident and the Tet Offensive are connected but that almost every expert with whom he has talked "believe there is a definite connection." *(Department of State Bulletin, vol 58, pp 221-25.)*

3 February-- The NLF Central Committee issues an appeal to the South Vietnamese people to rise up under the guidance of the Front to achieve complete victory: "The people of all strata in the cities and in the enemy-occupied areas in general are urged to rise in armed uprising using whatever weapons available to them, and in cooperation with the revolutionary armed forces, smash the puppet administrative offices and make themselves masters of their own house. Those in the newly liberated areas are urged to quickly join in the revolutionary organizations, form armed self-defence units, set up revolutionary administrative organs and defend them and crush all enemy counter-attacks. Those in areas liberated earlier and in the revolutionary bases are urged to serve the Front still better and redouble their efforts in production and fighting so as to perform even greater exploits in the war...The Central Committee of the N.F.L. appeals to the Chinese and other foreign residents to take their stand with the people of south Viet Nam and oppose the U.S. aggressors and their lackeys...It calls on the officers and men of the puppet army and the personnel of the puppet regime to seize every opportunity to join with the people of all strata and the revolutionary armed forces in armed uprisings and turn their guns on the U.S. invaders and the Thieu-Ky clique...The appeal says that the soldiers of the U.S. aggressor forces and the satellite troops should refuse to obey the orders of their warmongering commanders and refuse to take part in actions against the Vietnamese people. They should demand an end to the dirty war of aggression." *(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 8, 19 February 1968, pp. 9-10.)*

4 February-- Warsaw newspapers report that Poland has rejected suggestions about strengthening the policing role of the International Control Commission along Cambodia's borders. Poland's position is that the ICC "can obviously not undertake the task of protecting the Cambodian border, because this would exceed its possibilities, its rights and would mean an invasion into the range of sovereign rights of Cambodia." *(Baltimore Sun, 5 February 1968, p. 2.)*

4 February-- Ho Chi Minh sends a message of congratulations to NLF President Nguyen Huu Tho, which declares that the "victories won by the south Viet Nam armed forces and people in the early days of this spring have brought to a new, very favourable situation the war of resistance to U.S. aggression and for national salvation in which our entire people are engaged." However, he notes: "The nearer the victory, the greater the hardships. The enemy, like a cornered beast, will react more

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madly. Therefore, our armed forces and people should further strengthen their solidarity, fight perseveringly, harder and without let-up, so as to win still bigger victories." *(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 8, 19 February 1968, p. 8.)*

7 February-- A US State Department spokesman says that both India and Poland have refused to accept American offers of helicopters and other equipment for use in border investigations by the International Control Commission in Cambodia. He adds that the Commission's Indian chairman has informed Sihanouk that the ICC will respond only to "specific" complaints from Cambodia and will not increase its capability for doing so. Despite this action, the US offer of increased assistance to the ICC continues to stand. *(Baltimore Sun, 8 February 1968, p. 2.)*

8 February-- DRV Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh responds to questions posed by B. J. Cabane of Agence France-Presse in Hanoi. He states that "[o]ur people's position in the matter of settlement of the Vietnam problem is absolutely clear. The United States sent in troops for purposes of aggression against Vietnam. It must end the aggression and withdraw its troops... Such is the spirit of the four points set forth by the D.R.V. government and of the political program of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, which conform to the basic principles and chief provisions of the 1954 Geneva agreements on Vietnam... In my statement of Jan. 28, 1967, which was subsequently clarified in my Dec. 29, 1967, statement, I clearly indicated the path to negotiations between the D.R.V. and the United States...But bellicose American ruling circles have persisted in their aggressive schemes. The U.S. government asserts it is 'studying' and 'trying to understand' Hanoi's position. In fact, this is a maneuver designed to soothe public opinion and to cover up its attempts at further escalating the aggressive war in Vietnam. The so-called San Antonio formula is merely a variation on 'conditional cessation of bombing.' Obviously the U.S.A. does not seriously want to hold talks on settling the Vietnam problem." Trinh is asked about his statement of 29 December that "After bombing and all other acts of war against the D.R.V. are unconditionally halted, the D.R.V. will hold talks with the United States on problems relevant to this." Specifically, with regard to the issues that would be discussed in such negotiations, he replies: "I meant questions connected with settlement of the Vietnam problem on the basis of the 1954 Geneva agreements on Vietnam, and also other questions that might be raised by their side." With regard to timing, he states that "[t]alks will begin as soon as the U.S.A. proves it has in fact unconditionally halted bombing and all other acts of war against the D.R.V." *("Clear Position— Nguyen Duy Trinh Answers Questions of France-Presse Correspondent", trans. DES, Pravda, 9 February 1968, p. 4.)*

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10 February-- In an address in Atlantic City, Secretary of State Rusk says that the United States recently "deescalated our bombing of North Viet-Nam, especially in the immediate vicinity of Hanoi and Haiphong. Our purpose was to make it easier for Hanoi to consider the formula which President Johnson set forth in his address at San Antonio." He notes that diplomatic explorations continued up to the moment that the Communists launched their Tet offensive. The United States will not withdraw its offers, despite the offensive. The DRV Foreign Minister has said that a cessation of the bombing will lead to talks. The United States would like to know whether these talks would begin promptly, what would be discussed, etc. *(Department of State Bulletin, vol 58, p. 304.)*

10 February-- Pravda rejects Secretary Rusk's contentions that the North Vietnamese are not sincere about negotiating. American obstruction, it claims, is responsible for the stalemate: "However, at present the Washington leaders still have an opportunity to get out of the impasse. The whole question is whether Washington will decide to take advantage of this opportunity or will go further along the dangerous path of aggression and brigandage." *(Oleg Ignatyev, "Clear Position of the D.R.V.", Pravda, 10 February 1968, p. 5.)*

10-15 February-- During this period, Moscow's newspapers carry heavy coverage of the impact of the Tet Offensive. Dean Rusk's accusations of Hanoi's insincerity are rejected; public reaction in the US to the Tet Offensive is observed. North Vietnam's readiness to confer with Washington is repeatedly noted. An Izvestia commentary of 11 February states: "But who does not know that the current offensive unfolded after Washington rejected Hanoi's new peace initiative! Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh of the D.R.V. confirmed on Feb. 8 the D.R.V.'s readiness to hold peace talks with the U.S.A. if the latter proves it has in fact unconditionally halted bombing and all other acts of war against the D.R.V. In the U.S.A. and other countries this statement reverberated loudly. However, judging from the latest reports, official U.S. circles have again rejected this initiative...The responsibility for continuation of the heavy bloodshed in Vietnam lies, as before, wholly with Washington." *(V. Matveyev, "Futile Lesson", trans. DES, Izvestia, 11 February 1968, p. 11.)*

13 February-- On 11 and 12 February, the Presidium of the NLF Central Committee convened an extraordinary session to make an over-all survey of the Front's large-scale offensive, "draw appropriate conclusions and set immediate tasks..." On 13 February, the session issues a communique praising the "major all-round victories unheard-of in our great patriotic war..." These victories are of considerable importance: "Once more these victories prove

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the complete correctness of our political and military lines and policies. They result from a resolute and creative leadership which attaches equal importance to both military and political struggles, both urban and rural areas." It is announced that the session arrived at decisions on "tasks, policies and immediate measures" to "...maintain and accentuate the impact of their great successes...Our people's fight has reached a new phase which requires of us a high sense of urgency, one of relentless struggle and extremely rapid developments...We have made a really good start." *(South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation, Documents (South Vietnam: Giai Phong Publishing House, 1968), pp. 91-92, 94, 97-99.)*

14 February-- A statement by US Secretary of State Rusk read to news correspondents answers questions that have been posed about the possibility of negotiations with the DRV. The Secretary reveals that all explorations have resulted in rejection of the San Antonio Formula. He adds: "In recent weeks Hanoi knew that discussions of a peaceful settlement were being seriously explored; they also knew that there was a reduction of bombing attacks on North Viet-Nam, specifically in the Hanoi and Haiphong areas during these explorations. Their reply was a major offensive through South Viet-Nam to bring the war to the civilian population in most of the cities of that country. Their preparations for a major offensive in the northern provinces of South Viet-Nam continue unabated." He nevertheless closes his statement by declaring that "we will be interested in a serious move toward peace when Hanoi comes to the conclusion that it is ready to move in that direction." *(Department of State Bulletin, vol 58, p. 305.)*

15 February-- In testimony before the Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, General Wheeler and Secretary of Defense McNamara are questioned about the aims of the Communist Tet offensive and about American policy with regard to air strikes against North Vietnam. Secretary McNamara suggests that the Communist Tet offensive had the following objectives: "they were to destroy or subvert the GVN/Allied forces; eliminate the Government of Vietnam governmental structure; create a general uprising among the people; and establish a revolutionary government dominated by the National Liberation Front." The Secretary replies to a question about the Cambodian sanctuary: "...I do not believe it is a fundamental factor in the military equation. When I say that, I do not mean to say that the Vietcong have not used Cambodia both for supply and for rehabilitation purposes. But I do not believe it is a fundamental factor affecting military balance." General Wheeler comments that "the two key targets that it would be desirable militarily to interdict and keep interdicted would be the Port of Haiphong and the rail line that leads from South China--this is

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the northeast arm of the railroad--in to Hanoi." He says that this rail line has been interdicted on a number of occasions, but that weather prevents it from being continuously interdicted. These two actions against Haiphong and the northeast rail line "would seriously affect the flow of supplies" to the Vietnamese Communists. Secretary McNamara, however, does not agree with the importance of Haiphong. He argues: "There isn't anything, in my opinion, that the Soviets are supplying that is essential to the war that the Chicoms cannot substitute ...Red China can supply the food and the oil [needed for the North Vietnamese war effort]. The tonnage is not that large in relation to Red China's total supply. I am not suggesting that this would be easy for Red China, but I am suggesting it is entirely within her capability...He goes on to note that Cambodia has been used "to some extent as an infiltration route...as a rest center or rehabilitation center...On balance I would say its contribution to the strength of the forces in South Vietnam has not been great. Had its use been denied as a rest, rehabilitation, reorganization center I don't believe there would have been a noticeable weakening of the total Vietcong and North Vietnamese movement within South Vietnam." McNamara gives the Subcommittee two reasons why he opposes action against Haiphong. While the first is deleted for security reasons, the second is that "mining of Haiphong and its approaches would not, in my opinion, reduce the flow of supplies from North Vietnam to South Vietnam because the essential supplies are small in quantity and they can be moved into North Vietnam other then through the Port of Haiphong, either over the beach or by rail and road from China." *(90th Cong 2d Sess, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1969, Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives (Washington: GPO, 1968), pt 1, pp. 61, 69, 97, 101, 113, 116-17.)*

20 February-- North Vietnam accuses Laotian Premier Souvanna Phouma of making false allegations in order to justify the dispatch of US and right-wing Laotian troops to Communist-held areas in Laos. *(New York Times, 26 February 1968, p. 57.)*

21 February-- The New York Times reports that "an enemy force of more than 300 today seized a village within easy mortar range of Tansonnhut Airport and General William C. Westmoreland's quarters...The attack came as the Hanoi radio asserted that offensives against South Vietnamese centers had diverted allied attention from the rural areas and given Vietcong and North Vietnamese forces 'mastery over extremely large areas of the countryside.'" *(Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs, Mission to Hanoi (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), p. 348.)*

24 February-- U Thant makes a detailed statement to the press concerning his recent visit to New Delhi, Moscow, London, Paris, and

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Washington in search of peace in Vietnam. He says that if the Vietnam problem is seen as a contest of unyielding will between the United States and the Soviet Union it can have no solution. His recent contacts have confirmed his view that the indispensable first step of ending all bombing and other acts of war against North Vietnam should be taken and could be taken without too great a risk militarily. "If such a step were to be taken," he says, "Iam more than ever convinced that meaningful talks will take place much earlier than is generally supposed, even perhaps within a matter of a few days. As for the questions concerning the conduct of the fighting after the unconditional cessation of the bombing, particularly in the demilitarized zone and across the frontiers, it can reasonably be assumed that these will be dealt with in good faith. The parties themselves should solve this problem in order to allow for the larger negotiations to take place, with the participation of all parties concerned, including the Government of the Republic of Vietnam and the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam." *(New York Times, 25 February 1968.)*

28 February-- Norodom Sihanouk states that he will retire if the Communists do not cease spreading their guerrilla activities or unless he can check them in the next few months. *(New York Times, 1 March 1968, p. 29.)*

29 February-- A Hsinhua (New China) news agency "Commentator" writes with regard to Tet: "This powerful offensive has brought about a new situation in the Vietnamese people's war of resistance against U.S. aggression and for national salvation. Magnificently successful, it has upset U.S. imperialism's strategic dispositions and shaken the reactionary U.S. and puppet rule in the major towns in south Viet Nam to its very foundations. It has completely shattered the U.S. and puppet 'pacification programme' in the countryside and put out of action large numbers of enemy troops. It has dealt a staggering blow at the U.S. aggressors...On the south Viet Nam battlefield today, the P.L.A.F. and people have the initiative firmly in their hands in the conduct of the war. They can not only mount attacks on all fronts but also carry out sustained offensives against the enemy—one powerful offensive succeeding another in a short space of time. The U.S. aggressors have been reduced to a more passive position; they are receiving blow after blow and have lost more and more freedom of movement." This does not mean, however, that the struggle will be short or easy: "Confronted with their defeats in the aggressive war against Viet Nam, the U.S. aggressors are taking new measures to expand the war...sending 10,000 more troops to south Viet Nam as urgent reinforcements...But, whatever manpower and material resources U.S. imperialism may pour into its aggressive war in

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Viet Nam, it can never escape its complete defeat there. The Vietnamese people have long since made up their minds to fight a protracted war, to carry their war of resistance to U.S. aggression and for national salvation through to final victory." *(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 11, 11 March 1968, p. 16.)*

March-- In this month, a COSVN conference passes the 6th Resolution of the Central Office of South Vietnam. Subsequently, a number of captured documents refer to this Resolution and present what is probably its gist. One such document, captured by the US First Infantry Division in Binh Duong province in May, 1968, reports that in the first phase of the general offensive and general uprising the Communist forces recorded "great and unprecedented victories in all fields." VC/NVA losses at Tet and their failure to achieve the aims of touching off a revolt by Republic of Viet-Nam armed forces, inspiring mass uprisings and conquering cities are mentioned only obliquely in a list of deficiencies. Shortcomings in troop replenishment, proselyting activities and motivation of the masses are admitted, but the overall situation is nevertheless judged to be "more favorable to us than ever." Following this assessment, the document quotes the decision of the Sixth Conference of COSVN on immediate missions: "...continuously attack the enemy and motivate the masses to arise and seize the state power...strive to wear down and destroy a large part of the enemy's live forces and war facilities...maintain and step up activities in all aspects centered on towns and cities...liberate the whole countryside... surge forward to secure total victory and, at the same time, be ready to cope actively with events should the war become protracted and widened."* All Party members must be made to realize that the war has "entered a new phase, that of General Offensive and General Uprising, 'a very fierce and complicated strategic offensive period'..." During this phase, the purpose of the political struggle must be "to make use of violence to overthrow the enemy state power and build the people's revolutionary state power." Methods by which COSVN hopes to strengthen confidence in the Party's leadership and overcome difficulties in order to attain its objectives are outlined. The text admits that various Party echelons so far have lacked "correct and full" appreciation of the uprising policy. *(Text in Patrick J. McGarvey, Visions of Victory (Stanford: Stanford University, 1969), pp. 257-66.)*

5 March-- Vietnam: Documents and Research Notes, no. 35, analyses the fresh emphasis that was placed on administrative organization at the local level in rural areas in the aftermath of the Tet Offensive:

* Underlining appears in the original Vietnamese document.

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"Among the evidence is a directive on 'revolutionary government' issued by the Viet Cong high command, the Standing Committee of the Central Office of South Viet-Nam (COSVN or Nam Truong). The directive, dated March 5, was captured by a unit of the U.S. 25th Infantry Division in Hau Nghia Province...

'[We must] build up the revolutionary government so we can broaden it and establish a coalition government at the top,' the instruction says. 'The problem of building state power in each place is, above all, the problem of building village and hamlet government in liberated areas (including the rural areas and a number of urban sections), an indispensable matter which we should strive to achieve positively.'

Directions are given for village congresses to elect People's Liberation Councils made up of 15 to 35 members. The councils in turn are expected to select Village Liberation Committees of five to seven members. These members are to be assigned responsibilities for village general and military affairs, security, economic and financial affairs, information and culture, education, and public health and social welfare. The village committees will also select hamlet administrators from the membership of hamlet councils.

Qualifications for village and hamlet officials are stated in the directive. The local authorities must be of 'working class' origin and must have taken part in combat, 'serve the people with all their hearts', and 'have the people's confidence.'

Although the directive speaks of 'democratic' processes, it insists that elections must be carried out under the leadership and guidance of the communist party and that a principal duty of village and hamlet authorities must be to 'strengthen the tight Party leadership through Party and Group organizations.'

Also to tighten this leadership, the directive calls for an organization of Party Branch Committees along functional lines paralleling those of the Village Liberation Committees.

Village Liberation Committees have been previously sponsored in areas of Viet Cong control and elected by villagers from a single list of candidates. Two years ago, however, they were downgraded in the interests of more direct Party rule and so 'the basic revolutionary machine will not be complicated'...

The latest directive signifies another reversal and a return to the effort to fashion provisional 'government-style' administration in the countryside. It also calls for preparing personnel 'to establish the administration in the province and district in the future when the occasion is favorable.'" *(Viet-Nam: Documents and Research Notes, no. 35 (Saigon: US Mission, Vietnam, 1968), pp. 1-2.)*

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14 March-- In an obvious reference to the activities of RVN Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky, who has been advocating the creation of a guerrilla volunteer force to invade the DRV, a US State Department spokesman notes that one provision of the Manila Conference communique declares that "the South Vietnamese people have no desire to threaten or harm the people of the North, or to invade their country." He adds: "Our position remains as expressed in this communique and specifically with this quotation. It was a declaration of the Government of Vietnam which was endorsed by participating governments." *(Washington Post, 15 March 1968, p. 8.)*

15 March-- The New China news agency publishes an article entitled "Soviet Revisionists Escalate Service to U.S. Aggression Against Viet Nam", which accuses the "Soviet revisionist ruling clique" of stepping up its collusion with US imperialism in the past six months and lending support for the "Johnson Administration's 'peace talks' fraud". It details alleged Soviet collusion since September, 1967:

"Ever since Lyndon Johnson whipped up the sinister wind of 'peace talks' in San Antonio, the Soviet revisionist renegades at once joined the U.S. imperialists in peddling the new U.S. 'peace talks' fraud everywhere in a big way. Between September and December last year when the 22nd U.N. General Assembly and later the Security Council were in session, U.S. imperialism and Soviet revisionism worked in close collaboration, and on many occasions tried to get the United Nations and its Security Council to intervene in the Viet Nam question. U.S. representative Arthur Goldberg sang the old 'peace talks' tune and cried himself hoarse for a 'political settlement', a 'gradual de-escalation', and 'reconvocation of the Geneva conference'. The Soviet revisionist Foreign Minister A. Gromyko chimed in on the very next day; he talked a great deal about the 'dangers' of the Viet Nam situation so as to prepare public opinion for pushing the 'peace talks' plot. At the end of November, the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee passed a resolution calling on the U.S. Government to arrange to have the Viet Nam question 'discussed' in the Security Council. Then, the Soviet revisionists got busy plotting secretly with the U.S. imperialists, and spread the word through the so-called U.N. 'diplomatic quarters' that they 'would not oppose the discussion of the Viet Nam question in the Security Council'...

Late last December, shortly after the manoeuvres of the Soviet revisionists and U.S. imperialists to have the United Nations intervene in Viet Nam and carry out the 'peace talks' scheme met with abject failure, Lyndon Johnson personally undertook a trip to Asia and Europe and had private contacts with a number

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of lickspittles of U.S. imperialism and trumpeters of the 'peace talks', including the Pope, in another effort to push the 'peace talks' hoax. And in this, he again had the active collaboration of the Brezhnev-Kosygin clique. On December 19 in Moscow, Kosygin had long talks with George Romney, the Governor of Michigan who was then campaigning for the Republican Party's nomination as the presidential candidate in the coming U.S. elections. In late January this year, under Washington's remote control, Kosygin joined hands with British Prime Minister Harold Wilson in quite open and sinister activities for 'peace talks'. A Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union and the British Foreign Secretary visited Japan one after the other to confer with the Eisaku Sato government, while Kosygin and Wilson themselves were engaged in intensive talks in Moscow on the Viet Nam question. In the talks, Wilson was reported to have given Kosygin 'an accurate and up-to-date account of American thinking on Viet Nam' and Kosygin in return told Wilson the Soviet revisionists' attitude toward the Viet Nam question. In their joint communique, both sides 'emphasized the urgent need for a political settlement' of the issue and 'expressed their firm intention to take singly or jointly all actions within their power to achieve that goal.'

Later, Wilson declared gleefully that the 'bridge' to 'peace in Viet Nam' had been considerably shortened and that there was 'a relatively narrow gap' between Johnson and Kosygin in arranging 'peace talks'.

After these behind-the-scenes manoeuvres, the two major accomplices of U.S. imperialism, Kosygin and Wilson undertook trips abroad to promote the counter-revolutionary scheme of U.S. imperialism. Kosygin visited New Delhi at the end of January to have some confidential conferences with Indira Gandhi and Josip Broz Tito, while Wilson went to Washington in the middle of February to report to Johnson on his talks with the chieftains of the Soviet revisionists and the results of these talks.

At about that time, Brezhnev and Kosygin agreed to have personal interviews with foreign correspondents, in which they called for a halt to the U.S. air strikes against north Viet Nam so that 'peace talks' might begin. The correspondent of the American Magazine 'Life' reported that in his interview with American newsmen on January 19, Kosygin gave the impression that he was 'very serious' in bringing an end to the Viet Nam war.

At a time when the revolutionary people the world over are hailing the south Vietnamese people's new spring victories, the

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Soviet revisionist ruling clique has turned on full blast its propaganda machine to peddle, with fanatical fervour, the 'peace talks' swindle...

The Soviet revisionists have also offered advice through their newspapers and news agency to the Johnson Administration, telling them to listen to the 'voice of reason', to seize the opportunity, to make up their minds to 'make use' of the 'possibility of getting out of the blind alley' of the Viet Nam war, and to halt the bombing and start 'peace talks'...

On February 6, Kosygin received and held secret talks in Moscow with L. Thompson, the U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union. Three days later, on February 9, the Soviet revisionist clique authorised Tass News Agency to issue a statement officially advocating a 'halt in the bombing and peace talks'.

The Soviet revisionists invited U Thant, U.N. Secretary General, who was then running to and fro all over the world to peddle the U.S. 'peace talks' fraud, to pay a visit to Moscow; from February 11 to 12 they discussed 'peace prospects' in Viet Nam. It was disclosed that the Soviet revisionist chieftains during their talks 'assured U Thant they were willing to help in any way possible to facilitate the progress of peace talks'.

Kosygin and Brezhnev delivered speechs respectively on February 14 and 16 in Minsk and Leningrad, preaching that the Viet Nam question could not be settled 'by military means' but should 'follow the road of a political solution', and they stressed the need for an early 'halt in the bombing and the holding of peace talks'. They struck up the same tune as U Thant in his statement issued on February 24 at the United Nations reporting on his recently completed globe-trotting to promote the Viet Nam 'peace talks'.

During this period, the Soviet revisionists were active in urgent manoeuvres abroad. In Washington, the Soviet Ambassador to the United States, who had just come back for his post bringing with him secret orders of the Soviet revisionist clique, twice within 24 hours held secret talks on the Viet Nam question with U.S. Secretary of State Dean Rusk (February 15 and 16). In London, at the same moment, the Soviet ambassador to Britain visited British Prime Minister Harold Wilson, who had just come back from a visit to the United States, and was given a briefing 'in detail on the present American attitude on Viet Nam'. In Paris, the Soviet Ambassador to France was received at his request by French President de Gaulle on February 20. He told the President the attitude of the Soviet revisionists toward the development of the situation in Viet Nam, and they had an exchange of information and a consultation on the Viet Nam question."

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(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 13, 25 March 1968, pp. 16-18.)

19 March-- Pravda terms RVN Vice-President Nguyen Cao Ky's threats to invade North Vietnam "highly provocational". *(Ye. Kobelev, "A Puppet's Howls", trans. DES, Pravda, 19 March 1968, p. 5.)*

21 March-- Radio Hanoi broadcasts the complete text of a DRV decree on the punishment of "counterrevolutionary crimes". Vietnam: Documents and Research Notes comments:

"Hanoi's National Assembly Standing Committee orginally passed the decree on October 30, 1967, and President Ho Chi Minh signed an order promulgating it on November 10. However, for reasons unknown outside Hanoi, the decree was not made public until more than four months later, at a news conference held by the Secretariat of the National Assembly Standing Committee.

The authority for the decree is Article 7 of the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam (DRV). This article declares: 'The State strictly prohibits and punishes all acts of treason, opposition to the people's democratic system, or opposition to the reunification of the Fatherland.'

As defined in the decree, counterrevolutionary crimes are 'opposition to the Fatherland and the people's democratic power, sabotage of socialist transformation and construction undermining national defense and the struggle against U.S. aggression for national salvation aimed at defending the North, liberating the South, and reunifying the country.'

Fifteen specific crimes said to fit this definition are enumerated in the decree. In brief, they are: (1) treason, in collaboration with a foreign country (2) plotting to overthrow the 'people's democratic power' (3) espionage (4) intruding into DRV territory to violate security (5) armed rebellion (6) banditry (7) defecting to the enemy (8) murder, assault and kidnapping (9) sabotage (10) undermining 'the people's solidarity' (11) opposing state policies and laws (12) disrupting public order and security (13) disseminating counterrevolutionary propaganda (14) attacking detention camps and freeing convicts (15) harboring counterrevolutionary elements.

The crimes are broken down according to degrees of severity. Punishments matched with each are to be determined by whether a guilty person is 'the main plotter, leader, principal culprit, or one who stubbornly opposes the revolution.' Both 'attempted crimes' and 'actual crimes' are punishable.

Leniency is promised 'toward those who are forced, enticed, or misled and those who sincerely repent.' Provision is also

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made to exempt from punishment or reduce the sentences of those who show 'redemption.'

As an example of the provisions, Article 4 of the decree pertains to the crime of 'plotting to overthrow the people's democratic power.' If an individual is a 'plotter, leader, instigator or principal accomplice,' he is subject to imprisonment for 15 years to life, or to execution. However, if he is merely a follower or secondary accomplice, he is subject to imprisonment for only five to 15 years or, 'under extenuating circumstances', for three to 12 years.

For this crime and most of the others, conviction will also mean loss of 'the right to vote and to run for election, the right to work in state organizations and in the People's Armed Forces organizations, and the right to hold a responsible position in political economic, cultural and social organizations.' The convicted man's property may also be confiscated.

Nhan Dan, official newspaper of the Viet-Nam Workers' Party Central Committee, editorialized on the new regulations March 21. It said the decree 'proves the determination of our people to continue socialist construction in the North, defend the common basic ground of revolution over the entire country, struggle against the U.S. war of destruction, consolidate the great rear, support wholeheartedly southern compatriots to defeat the U.S. aggressors and their lackeys, and march forward to peacefully reunify the homeland.'

The editorial further stated, 'The decree on punishing the counterrevolutionary crimes is the sharp tool strengthening socialist legislation and strengthening dictatorship vis-a-vis the enemy of our people and our nation. In the light of experience, this decree has systematized and perfected the past regulations about repressing counter-revolutionaries in the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam and is aimed at satisfying the requirements of the current revolutionary tasks. It demonstrates the line and policy of quenching the counterrevolutionaries of our country in the present phase.'

In conclusion, the editorial defined who the counterrevolutionaries are by stating, "The counterrevolutionaries in the North comprise the stubborn elements in the former exploiting classes, landlords and capitalists, the reactionary elements profiting by religion, the former puppet administration, army elements not wanting to transform themselves, and the other reactionary and sabotaging elements. Instigated by imperialists, mainly U.S. ones, they plot to intensify activity attempting to obstruct the socialist construction work, weaken our national defense force,

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and prevent the northern people's support for the Liberation War waged by southern compatriots. The counterrevolutionaries in the north of our country are only a small force, but their scheme is to perfidious and their activity is quite dangerous.' *(Viet-Nam: Documents and Research Notes (Saigon: US Mission, Vietnam, 1968), pp. 1-2.)*

23 March-- The New China news agency reports that the Viet Cong People's Liberation Armed Forces on 19 March issued a "Special Communique No. 4" which analyzed the great importance of the Tet victories:

"First, the Liberation Armed Forces and people of south Viet Nam, in a very short period of time, have completely changed the situation on the battlefield, putting the enemy in tighter straits and creating a most favourable new military situation. The 'two-pronged strategy' of U.S. imperialism has been basically foiled and its military objectives for 1968 have proved futile from the very outset.

Secondly, these victories have made the people in both parts of Viet Nam believe more strongly than ever in the final victory of their struggle to resist U.S. aggression and for national salvation. They are vigorously encouraging the people in the areas still under enemy control to rise and seize power. On the other hand, they have rendered the U.S. imperialists and their henchmen more isolated and have further sharpened their contradictions.

Thirdly, with the liberation of vast expanses of the rural areas, the people of south Viet Nam have further expanded and consolidated their base areas and have created favourable conditions for the development of agricultural production and the augmentation of the potentials of the war of resistance.

Fourthly, these victories have further inspired the confidence and courage of the progressive people of the whole world in their struggle against imperialism headed by U.S. imperialism and its henchmen and for national independence, peace, democracy and social progress.

The successes mark a very important turning point in the sense that they have rapidly changed the balance of forces between the enemy and ourselves, opened up a new situation in the war of resistance to U.S. aggression, and laid a firm basis for the widespread offensive and uprising to win complete victory..."

However, it is noted, in order to "win final victory, the struggle ahead is still arduous, because the enemy will make death-bed struggles." *(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 14, 1 April 1968, p. 12.)*

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23 March-- Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi calls the current international situation excellent and getting better every day. The spring victories have brought about a new situation in Vietnam, and even US attempts to expand the war and peddle its "'peace talks' swindle" will never "shake the determination of the heroic Vietnamese people to carry on a protracted war of resistance." *(Hsinhua (New China), no. 14, 1 April 1968, p. 5.)*

26 March-- George W. Ball, who had been Undersecretary of State under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson and who had previously described the bombing of North Vietnam as a "mistake" decribes the problem of halting the bombing. He is writing in the winter of 1967-1968 material which is to be published in his book, The Discipline of Power. Excerpts appear in Life magazine on 26 March 1968. While Ball sees difficulties in ending the bombing of North Vietnam, he vigorously opposes any escalation of the air war or invasion of the North. In his judgment, continued bombing of MIG bases would almost surely lead to the basing of the MIGs in China and would result in heavy domestic pressure for an attack against the Chinese airfields. Any attempt to mine Haiphong Harbor or to interrupt the entry of Soviet ships would pose a direct challenge to Moscow. The Kremlin had been forced to turn their ships around at the time of the Cuban missile crisis quarantine, but it might well refuse to accept another similar humiliation. Nor would it make political sense to interrupt Soviet sea transport and thus force Moscow to come to terms with Peking in order to move goods and supplies through Chinese air space or across Chinese territory. Moreover, Hanoi would be forced into a greater dependence upon Peking, which--perhaps unlike the Soviet Union--clearly desires a protracted conflict. "Finally," he argues, "proposals for a land invasion of North Vietnam, which is no doubt militarily feasible, would, I believe, be an almost certain way of compelling a substantial Chinese response. Our bombing of North Vietnam has already created unease in China and, based on the hard evidence of history, a land invasion of that buffer state would almost certainly compel Peking to react violently." If Peking came into the war it is unlikely that the Soviets could avoid direct intervention also, and this would be the beginning of World War III. *(George W. Ball, The Discipline of Power, Essentials of a Modern World Structure (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1968), pp. 323-26, 352-53.)*

27 March-- The New China news agency accuses the US of attempting to reverse its failures in Vietnam by widening the conflict to cover all of Indochina: "It is preparing to commit its own troops to the aggression in Laos and have the Thai reactionaries send more of their troops there." Peking also accuses the Soviets of stepping up their collaboration with the "Laotian reactionaries". *(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 15, 8 April 1968, p. 4.)*

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28 March-- Norodom Sihanouk reveals that he has received assurances from China and North Vietnam that they would not interfere in Cambodia's internal affairs. *(New York Times, 29 March 1968, p. 2.)*

29 March-- A Chinese Foreign Ministry statement is issued protesting the bombing of Peking's economic and cultural mission in the Pathet Lao headquarters of Khang Khay. Unspecified casualties are also reported. *(New York Times, 30 March 1968, p. 6.)*

30 March - 1 April-- American journalists Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs during this period are serving as contacts between Hanoi and the US State Department. On 30 March, they converse with Hoang Tung, who is editor of Nhan Dan. According to Ashmore and Baggs, Tung tells them that:

"...His government would be prepared to talk later about prisoner exchange and the Red Cross, and anything else we wanted to discuss. But the first priority ought to be on ways and means of getting talks started. 'If we can figure out a way to end this war,' he said, 'the exchange of all prisoners, the role of the Red Cross, all of these matters can be taken care of.'

He dismissed the Clifford modification* of the President's San Antonio formula as irrelevant. 'It means nothing to speak of normal resupply and reinforcement of the fighting men in the South,' he said. 'As you can see we have been able to supply the South adequately while the bombing goes on. We will continue to do so without the bombing—until the shooting stops.'

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* On 25 January, before the Senate Armed Services Committee, the newly-nominated Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford stated with regard to North Vietnamese infiltration: "I do not expect them to stop their military activities. I would expect to follow the language of the President when he said that if they would agree to start negotiations promptly and not take advantage of the pause in the bombing...Their military activity will continue in South Vietnam, I assume, until there is a cease-fire agreed upon. I assume that they will continue to transport the normal amount of goods, munitions, and men to South Vietnam. I assume that we will continue to maintain our forces and support our forces during that period. So what I am suggesting, in the language of the President is, that he would insist that they not take advantage of the suspension of the bombing." *(90th Cong 2d Sess, Nomination of Clark M. Clifford to be Secretary of Defense, Hearing before the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate (Washington: GPO, 1968), pp. 9-23.)*

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This pretty much precluded any discussion of other forms of mutual deescalation. As [William] Bundy had suggested, we probed in several directions, cautiously preceding the probe with the phrase 'We know our government is interested...' But we ran into a palpable stiffening at any suggestion of formal reciprocity.

As the morning wore on, it became clear that so far as Hoang Tung was concerned we already were engaged in Phase A of the two-part negotiating formula—that is, we were meeting privately to discuss procedural questions while the bombing continued, as it did dramatically..."

Ashmore and Baggs later summarize their conversation in a 10 April State Department briefing memorandum, which records:

"Hoang Tung said he would like to give us the position of his government as it related to talks.

First, he said, the US simply must stop the bombing of DRV territory without condition. He said this was the one inflexible position of his government. We asked if this insistence included the territory of South Vietnam. No, Hoang Tung responded. His government considered US acts of war against DRV territory unilateral and indefensible. On the contrary, there was fighting between two parties in the South. And, anyway, he emphasized, both sides must realize that the peace could only be made step by step.

He continued by saying that, if the US wished to test the good will of the DRV, then the US should stop the bombing. He added that the DRV was prepared at any time to sit down with the US to find 'sensible solutions.' At this point, Hoang Tung said he would like to emphasize the procedure for meeting from the DRV view:

1. Halt the bombing without condition. He emphasized that the bombing was really the important ingredient; however, he used the phrase, 'all acts of war against DRV territory,' specifying that this includes the naval bombardment, and the artillery barrage across the DMZ.

2. After the bombing has stopped, Hoang Tung said, the DRV will meet promptly with the U.S. 'It will be a matter of days,' he said.

He suggested that his government thought the first meeting should be 'a contact' between a representative of any level, high or low, and that this contact should determine three matters:

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a. The timing of a conference between the two countries.

b. The place of a conference.

c. The level of representation at the conference.

He said the DRV would meet any place mutually agreeable with the US. At this point, Hoang Tung said the first contact should be procedural. He made it clear under our questioning that he visualized that the first contact would not engage in any substantive discussion, even of agenda. These matters would be postponed until the first meeting that would follow this 'first contact.' The position was later significantly modified after President Johnson's speech.

He asked us to state our understanding of what he had said and we repeatedly went over point by point our interpretation of what he had said, and he indicated concurrence that it was the correct understanding. At one point we pressed very hard on the question of whether the old issue of 'would' and 'could' could be raised in connection with what he was now saying. He said emphatically that he was saying that the meeting 'will' take place and added that he had so stated previously in a letter to us that was never received.

We said that immediate questions were raised by the DRV's position as he stated it. What would be the basis for the talks? Would the DRV insist that the Geneva Accords of 1954, the 4 points of the DRV, and the position statement of the NLF be the basis for talks? No, he said. These adequately set forth the general views of his government, but the actual basis for talks would be determined by the DRV and the US. He added that he understood that the talks could not be limited to points raised by the DRV. In answer to questions, Hoang Tung said the interests of the NLF and the Saigon government would have to be discussed by the DRV and the US. In sum, he concluded, the agenda would be composed of anything the DRV and the US wished to talk about.

What assurances, we asked, were there that such an open-ended agenda would not lead to the development of the kind of endless marathon the USA had endured at Panmunjom in Korea? Well, there were two eventualities, Hoang Tung replied. The talks could end the war, or the talks could fail and all the fighting would resume. We probed on the previous DRV insistence that the US withdraw its troops. He said this undoubtedly would be discussed at a conference, but he said that he could not imagine an agreement to withdraw that would result in 500,000 Americans pulling out the next day. We interpreted this as acceptance of a phased withdrawal of troops, with some flexibility on timing.

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We used this phrase, 'phased withdrawal,' subsequently and it was never objected to.

What of a future government in the South? Hoang Tung said his government believed that a coalition government would evolve in the South, but procedures to establish the government there would have to be discussed in the conference when the DRV and the US get down to how they would bring the NLF and Saigon into the conversations.

We inquired again about a cessation of bombing as the signal for talks to begin. Would some formal statement by the US be necessary? No, he said. His government would accept the simple act of just stopping the bombing.

In this regard, speaking to the point of the initial contact, Hoang Tung said the DRV wouldn't care who moved first after the bombing stops. The DRV would make the call to establish the contact, if desired. He said his government would want only to be assured that the bombing had stopped by the time that the contact began.

We broke the morning conversation at 11 a.m. and returned at 3 p.m. It was obvious that during the interval Hoang Tung had been reviewing our conversation with official parties. He said as much, and we thought we could see some indication of shifting positions between morning and afternoon. We began by summarizing our understanding of the views he had expressed in the morning.

We emphasized that, while we had no authority to negotiate in any sense on any of these procedural details, we did think that as much specific detail as possible should be included and transmitted by the DRV to our government. We said that we thought that, if his proposals could be refined so as to name places, suggest time, state intervals, this would be evidence of good faith, and should avoid the kind of confusion on which some previous contacts had foundered. He seemed to agree that this was advisable and constantly talked to the point of making definite determination of such matters. However, he always seemed in this and subsequent conversations to want the initial motion for, say, designating a place of contact to come from the US.

We concluded our talks late in the afternoon. We agreed to meet again on Monday. Hoang Tung asked if we would summarize in writing our understanding of what he had said. We agreed to give him such a summary of what he had said when we met again on Monday."

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Ashmore and Baggs also record Hoang Tung's reaction to President Johnson's announcement of 31 March (see following entry):

"We diligently put together the written summary Hoang Tung had requested, and had it waiting when we saw him again early Monday afternoon. But by that time Lyndon Johnson had spoken, and as the obviously harried editor pointed out, everything that had been said on Saturday had to be reviewed in this new light. He must, he said, get back to an important meeting and would be in touch with us again as soon as possible. But, he added at the door, he and his colleagues would be interested in the reaction of two loyal, if critical, Americans to Mr. Johnson's announcement.

Mr. Johnson had surprised us as much as he had anyone else in Hanoi, we said, but in our view the importance of the announcement could not be overestimated. We took it to be Lyndon Johnson's way of certifying the sincerity of this new move toward peace—perhaps the only method left to him to do so in view of the steady erosion of confidence in his pronouncements at home and abroad. For a man of the President's temperament and ambition the decision not to run again had to be regarded as an act of political self-immolation. We thought it urgently important that the DRV take the new offer to negotiate seriously and respond in kind.

This, Tung said, was what we now needed to talk about, and he would be in touch with us as early as possible on Tuesday." *(Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs, Mission to Hanoi (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), pp. 122-26.)*

31 March-- In a nationwide televised address, President Johnson reveals that since last September his representatives have traveled around the world seeking a basis for peace talks on Vietnam according to the San Antonio formula, which provided: "That the United States would stop its bombardment of North Vietnam when that would lead promptly to productive discussions--and that we would assume that North Vietnam would not take military advantage of our restraint." The DRV had denounced this offer and had mounted the Tet offensive, which, while failing to achieve the Communist objectives, had "caused widespread disruption and suffering." In an effort to bring an end to the war, the President now proposes again to stop the bombing of North Vietnam. He says: "We ask that talks begin promptly, that they be serious talks on the substance of peace. We assume that during those talks Hanoi will not take advantage of our restraint. We are prepared to move immediately toward peace through negotiations. So tonight, in the hope that this action will lead to early talks, I am taking the first step to de-escalate the conflict.

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We are reducing--substantially reducing--the present level of hostilities, and we are doing so unilaterally and at once. Tonight I have ordered our aircraft and our naval vessels to make no attacks on North Vietnam except in the area north of the demilitarized zone where the continuing enemy build-up directly threatens allied forward positions and where the movement of their troops and supplies are clearly related to that threat." He stresses that the area which will be freed from attacks includes almost 90 percent of North Vietnam's population and most of its territories. "Thus there will be no attacks around the principal populated areas, or in the food-producing areas of North Vietnam." He cannot in good conscience stop all bombing as long as doing so would immediately and directly endanger the lives of American men and their Allies. "Our purpose in this action is to bring about a reduction in the level of violence that now exists." In order to move in the direction of a political settlement, President Johnson calls on Great Britain and the Soviet Union to do all they can to move toward a genuine peace in Southeast Asia. He designates Ambassador Averell Harriman as his personal representative for such talks as Hanoi may agree to. He emphasizes that the US will continue to support South Vietnam and will accelerate the reequipment of the ARVN in order to meet the enemy's increased firepower. He says that "We have no intention of widening this war. But the United States will never accept a fake solution to this long and arduous struggle and call it peace." He thinks that the peace can be based on the 1954 Geneva Agreements and the Manila Conference pledge. He points out that his Johns Hopkins University speech has announced that the United States would take part in regional social and economic development in Southeast Asia and that North Vietnam could take part in this common effort. He concludes by announcing: "With American sons in the fields far away, with America's future under challenge right here at home, with our hopes and the world's hopes for peace in the balance every day, I do not believe that I should devote an hour or a day of my time to any personal partisan causes or to any duties other than the awesome duties of this office--the Presidency of your country. Accordingly, I shall not seek, and I will not accept, the nomination of my Party for another term as your President." *(New York Times, 1 April 1968.)*

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CHAPTER IV

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1-3 April-- Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs, who are in North Vietnam serving as a communications link between Hanoi and Washington, describe the debate within the Lao Dong Politburo over President Johnson's concessions of 31 March:

"...There was, first of all, Hoang Tung's [editor of Nhan Dan] obvious distraction, which, we began to understand, was occasioned by a division within the government over the correct response to President Johnson's overture.

One faction, with which Tung was evidently identified, wanted to accept the new restriction on bombing as sufficient to justify at least an initial contact with the United States at the official level. Others regarded the juggling of the bomb line a mere trick, and the tangible evidence was on their side. In the first thirty-six hours after the President's speech there were twelve heavy air raids against DRV territory, some of these as much as 350 kilometers north of the demilitarized zone.

The dialogue within the government continued through Tuesday and most of Wednesday, while Washington and the world waited for some official reaction from Hanoi. At our one extended meeting with Hoang Tung during this period, at dinner on Tuesday evening, he grimly handed us a detailed list of the air raids that had taken place since the President's speech. By this time Tung knew that we had opened a communications channel to Washington via Vientiane, and he clearly wanted word passed as to the possible consequences of this apparent contradiction of the newly announced bombing policy...

Meanwhile, we continued our effort to supply Tung with ammunition for advocating a softer line in his discussions with the DRV inner circle. The compelling fact, we insisted, was Lyndon Johnson's announcement that he was withdrawing from the Presidential contest. From our own fairly considerable experience with Democratic Party politics, we could attest that his was an irrevocable decision. Thus his decision not to run again had to be regarded as his own peculiar testimony of faith, intended to slam a hard period at the end of his statement that he was severely restricting the bombing. We pointed out to Tung that even if the President should later have second thoughts, he had already unleashed restive leaders of his party at a critical moment and put into motion political forces he could no longer control.

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Without the Presidential withdrawal, we conceded, the juggling of the bomb line could hardly be accepted by Hanoi as evidence of good faith. In the context, however, it had to be seen as a genuine move toward negotiation—a turning of the Presidential back on those in the administration who had sold Mr. Johnson on the disastrous theory that he could bring the Vietnamese war to a close on his own terms by applying military pressure on the North.

The best test of our thesis, we suggested, lay in the general public reaction to the speech in the United States. Although we were sealed away from the news, it would be our expectation that Mr. Johnson's gesture had been widely hailed as a genuine move toward a negotiated settlement—and as such had received overwhelming public support in almost all quarters. Tung could check his own monitored radio reports from the United States, and the summaries of American press reaction available to him, and see if our long-distance guessing was correct. If so, we argued, a decision by Hanoi to reject the President's overture certainly would have a tremendously adverse effect on American public opinion—might, indeed, restore the credibility of the hard-liners who had been arguing all along that the DRV was not really willing to enter into peace talks but was using the prospect of negotiations as a ruse to weaken the American military effort in the South.

Tung indicated that he would put these arguments to the Vietnamese leaders who, somewhere beyond our ken, were wrestling with the fateful problem. At his request we reduced the case for negotiations to a written summary he could use as essential background in the course of the arguments that would continue until the official DRV response to President Johnson was issued late Wednesday." *(Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs, Mission to Hanoi (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), pp. 128-30.)*

2 April-- In an interview with the editor-in-chief of Look magazine, Cambodia's Norodom Sihanouk notes: "All national leaders must be Machiavellian in the interest of their people. And I must maneuver as best I can for Cambodia...If I take your side, the Communists will move in massively and organize an unmanageable rebellion against my government; and if I side with the Vietcong militarily, Cambodia will become a vassal of Vietnam--or China--and get bombed by your Air Force in the bargain." He states that he proposed an expansion of the ICC "to prove my good faith." He is aware that there are some VC crossing into Cambodia in unpopulated areas: "They came over mostly to get food and never in large groups--not even up to company strength. We usually give them at least 24 hours to get out, as they often claim the Americans are lying in wait

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for them." He also says "a lot of" rice "is being smuggled by traders to the Vietcong, who pay high prices in local currency. We have a trade agreement with the Vietcong, but 90 percent of that trade is illegal and the government gets no foreign exchange." *(William Attwood, "Sihanouk Talks", Look, 2 April 1968, pp. 64-69.)*

3 April-- The official Vietnam News Agency broadcasts an announcement from Hanoi that the DRV will enter into negotiations with the United States. The text of this statement says that the Vietnamese people adhere to the four points of the DRV and the political program of the NLF. It claims that President Johnson's offer is a "perfidious trick" aimed at appeasing public opinion—that bombing of the area south of the 20th parallel will continue. It notes that the offer has been made by the US "in the face of an extremely critical situation with no way out in South Vietnam and the heavy setbacks in the war of destruction in North Vietnam, in the face of great difficulties--political, social and financial--due to the aggressive war in Vietnam, and in the face of even stronger pressures from world public opinion and from progressive American opinion." It is obvious that the United States has not seriously and fully met the legitimate demands of the DRV. "However, for its part," the DRV "declares its readiness to appoint its representative to contact the United States representative with a view to determining with the American side the unconditional cessation of the United States bombing raids and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam so that talks may start." *("D.R.V. Government Statement", trans. DES, Pravda, 4 April 1968, p. 1.)*

4 April-- American newspapermen Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs meet with Nhan Dan editor Hoang Tung in Hanoi. They report that "he made it clear that the way was open for direct contact between the two governments. However, he said, the problem now was to make certain that it was understood that the substantive discussion at the meeting could not begin until the bombing actually had been halted. This was the point that would provide the main peg of controversy all through the opening weeks of the Paris negotiations." Ashmore and Baggs summarize their discussion with Tung in a briefing memorandum for Ambassador Harriman at the State Department on 10 April:

"When he met us Hoang Tung was obviously extremely pleased with the official DRV statement in response to President Johnson. He pointed out the 'however' paragraph and indicated that this represented a conciliatory gesture of real magnitude. He grinned and said: 'They went further than I thought they would'. We

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told him that our reading of the message agreed with that interpretation and that we felt that this might well make way for the beginning of the contact he had discussed earlier.

Then, at his suggestion, we began to go over the papers we had sent him, including our previous summaries, step by step. This was the most detailed discussion yet, devoted almost entirely to attempting to get a precise understanding of what the DRV expected to actually happen at the first contact, and so far as possible, what was expected, in procedural terms, to follow at the conference proper...

We pursued this in flyspecking detail because, as we told Hoang Tung, we felt that the official statement in its English version might be subject to misinterpretation. It was not possible, we suggested, to tell precisely what the DRV expected in regard to a guarantee that the bombing had halted. It was possible, we said, to read the statement to mean the DRV is prepared to meet with the bombing still going on, on the assumption that at that point this could be a matter settled promptly, but this could mean bombing was still subject to discussion.

Hoang Tung said that the language of the reference 'with a view to determining with the American side the unconditional cessation of US bombing raids' meant that the bombing raids should be halted by the time the representatives of the US and the DRV met. We pointed out that this was certainly not plain to us and that again, if the DRV really wanted talks to end the war, then it should be more specific on this point and immediately transmit this information to our government. Hoang Tung agreed.

There apparently was some shift in Hoang Tung's previous position, which we had understood made a very clear and sharp distinction between procedural matters to be dealt with at the first contact, and more substantive questions, which were to be delayed until the conference proper. At this stage, in order to try to establish the distinction between contact and conference, he began referring to the 'Harriman conference' —meaning the high-level meeting, and not necessarily the point of first contact. We took this to mean that the procedure was still for a first exchange at the ambassadorial level which would take care of determining the facts of the halting of the bombing, and the details of the following separate meeting. However, Hoang Tung never quite agreed that this was an accurate statement—always leaving open what appeared to be the possibility of talking of 'other things' at the initial contact. He finally

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asked that we write down, again, the clearest possible interpretation in English, by the numbers, of our understanding of what his position was as based on our discussion of the April 3 DRV statement. He said he would have this approved, amended, or rejected, in whole or in part, as soon as possible by his government—maybe today, certainly tomorrow. He said again, when we pointed out that time was running out, that we could be assured that he could give us 'a piece of paper' before we left Hanoi.

The following six points were drafted in Hoang Tung's office while he and the interpreter stood by, except for one departure for Hoang Tung's private phone booth where presumably he reported he was bringing over another piece of paper.

The six points, as understood by us, from our detailed conversations with Hoang Tung, were thus put down on paper:

The following is presented as setting forth the official position of the DRV on acceptable procedure for arranging contact with USA.

1. USA representative will be prepared to inform DRV representative that the bombing of all DRV territory has been halted without condition.

2. Total cessation of bombing will have been in effect for at least 24 hours prior to contact between DRV and US representatives.

3. Initial contact will be at ambassadorial level in Moscow, or at any other site where both countries maintain diplomatic missions.

4. The initial contact will deal with questions of procedure to arrange a conference. These questions include:

   a. Time of conference.

   b. Place of conference.

   c. Level of representation at conference.

5. Upon agreement on procedural matters, DRV and USA will announce simultaneously the time and place of the conference.

6. Representation of conference would consist initially of DRV and US. All substantive questions raised by both countries will be open for discussion.

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Hoang Tung took the paper and promised again an official response by his government.

(The inclusion of Moscow as the site for the conference resulted from repeated statements by Hoang Tung that any one of a number of capitals would be suitable. We suggested that he should designate if possible what the DRV first choice would be. In the course of the conversation he seemed at that point to think that Moscow was the most likely capital mentioned. We asked if, in writing down the summary, he wanted us to write down Moscow or leave it out. He said go ahead and write it in; it is your summary—but it may be changed. We took this to mean that he did not at the point have final information as to what the selection of the city would be.)

We would like to emphasize again that this sequence of papers written by us and handed to Hoang Tung for consideration by his government were entirely responsive in nature. In each instance we were responding to his request to summarize our understanding of what Hoang Tung had said. Nothing included should be construed as representing a procedural or substantive suggestion from us." *(Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs, Mission to Hanoi (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), pp. 138-41.)*

5 April-- The New China news agency attacks President Johnson's announcement of a partial halt to the bombing of North Vietnam:

"In throwing out the new fraud of stopping bombing to induce 'peace talks' at this time, Johnson's aim is obviously to gain a breathing space on the Viet Nam battlefield so as to further expand the war. At the same time, in making empty talks on 'de-escalation' in its war of aggression against Viet Nam, he wants to reassure the public, stabilize the position of the U.S. dollar, cope with the pressure of public opinion both at home and abroad, and allay the class contradictions in the United States as well as the quarrelling within its ruling circles...

Our great teacher Chairman Mao teaches us: "All reactionary forces on the verge of extinction invariably conduct desperate struggles. They are bound to resort to military adventure and political deception in all their forms in order to save themselves from extinction."

Johnson's televised speech itself has laid bare his so-called 'bombing halt' and 'peace talks' as an out-and-out war blackmail and political swindle. While proclaiming a 'bombing halt', he clamoured belligerently at the same time: 'I cannot... stop all bombing,...whether a complete bombing halt becomes

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possible in the future will be determined by events.' Swearing that the U.S. 'resolve' to invade Viet Nam 'is unshakable', he declared at the same time that the United States will send more than 13,000 additional aggressor troops to south Viet Nam in the immediate future, increase its appropriations for the aggressive war in Viet Nam by 5,100 million dollars in this and the next fiscal years and 'accelerate the re-equipment' of the south Vietnamese puppet troops.

What is more, immediately after Johnson's televised address, the United States made barbarous and indiscriminate bombing attacks on north Viet Nam, exceeding one hundred times in a single day...

These facts amply show that in spite of its new garb, the 'peace talks' fraud trotted out by Johnson this time is still essentially a smokescreen for covering up the expansion of the war."

After charging that Moscow's hand played an important role in bringing about the partial halt in the bombing, Peking concludes that "the Vietnamese question can only be solved by defeating the U.S. aggressors completely on the battle-field and forcing them to pull out of south Viet Nam." *(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 16, 15 April 1968, pp. 13, 8.)*

5 April-- The DRV delivers its formal reply to President Johnson's 31 March speech in an aid mémoire transmitted through American correspondents Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs. This document states, in part:

"The U.S. Government has not seriously and fully met the legitimate demands of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, of progressive American opinion and of world opinion. However, for its part, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam declared its readiness to appoint its representative to contact the U.S. representative with a view to determining with the American side the unconditional cessation of the U.S. bombing raids and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, so that the talks may start.

Details about the contact between the representatives of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the United States may be as follows:

—The representative with ambassadorial rank of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam is ready to contact the representative of the U.S. Government.

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—The place of contact may be Phnom Penh or another place to be mutually agreed upon.

—In the course of the contact, the U.S. side will specify the date when the unconditional cessation of the U.S. bombing raids and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam will become effective; then the two parties will reach agreement on the time, place and level of the talks." *(Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs, Mission to Hanoi (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), p. 145.)*

6 April-- A Soviet Government statement is issued which "fully supports" the DRV declaration of 3 April as a "realistic way" to end the war in Vietnam. "The further development of events depends on whether or not the United States of America takes the next step: on whether or not it will halt completely and unconditionally the bombing and other acts of war against North Vietnam, whether or not it will take a positive attitude toward the well-known proposals of the D.R.V. government and the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam on ways of settling the Vietnam question. The Soviet government believes that these proposals are a good basis for a lasting settlement in Vietnam...The Soviet government expresses the hope that the government of the U.S.A. will seriously weigh the situation that has come about and will take further steps that would lead in fact to a cessation of the war and to a political settlement." *("Soviet Government Statement", trans. DES, Pravda, 6 April, p. 1.)*

11 April-- At a news conference, Secretary of Defense Clifford is asked whether the Communist pull-back at Khe Sanh represents an effort on their part to deescalate the fighting. He replies: "I do not interpret it as a de-escalation on their part. The President's speech was the evening of March 31. The major withdrawal from the Khe Sanh area by the enemy started March 12. So for a period of over two weeks before he made his speech they were in the process of withdrawing. I believe we have sufficient information now to indicate to us that the reason they were withdrawing was because they were in the process of being destroyed. One division we know of retired after a while in Laos at only a small percentage of its former strength. We got a number of prisoner statements that indicate that the area around Khe Sanh from the enemy standpoint was becoming increasingly untenable; that the casualties they had were prohibitive and they had no alternative but to withdraw." *(Washington Post, 12 April 1968, p. 11.)*

15 April-- Peking's New China news agency accuses the US of intensifying the war in the fortnight since President Johnson's

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speech of 31 March. Among other things, the Chinese charge Washington with having stepped up the bombing of North Vietnam, "concentrating its fire north of the military demarcation line, with an intensity such as never seen before." The announcement that more Thai troops will be sent to Vietnam and the preparations to increase American troop strength to about 550,000 are also denounced. Washington's rejection of Phnom Penh as a forum for "contacts" between DRV and US representatives is seen as exposing as fraudulent President Johnson's earlier pledge to send representatives anywhere, anytime to discuss a way of ending the war. Peking accuses the US of using "peace talks" as a means for gaining a respite and providing a smokescreen for intensifying the war: "The Johnson Administration is doing all it can to put across its 'peace talks' fraud precisely because it faces unprecedented difficulties at home and abroad...Moreover, the U.S. general election is also drawing closer. In order to pull the wool over the eyes of the people in the United States and the world, Johnson has, with the close cooperation and all-out help of the Soviet revisionist renegade clique, resorted to this trick by means of which he is attempting to get round the impasse...U.S. imperialism will definitely not give up its designs of aggression against Viet Nam. Only by thoroughly defeating the U.S. aggressors on the battlefield and driving each and every aggressive soldier out of Viet Nam soil can the Vietnamese people attain their sacred goal of national liberation and reunification of their motherland." *(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 17, 22 April 1968, p. 20.)*

25 April-- Radio Liberation broadcasts a manifesto outlining the objectives that have been adopted at a "founding congress" of the national Alliance (as opposed to the various city Alliances) of National, Democratic and Peace Forces. This "congress" had met on 20-21 April at a rubber plantation outside Mimot, Cambodia. The manifesto reads:

"1. The South Vietnamese people are very eager for peace, but peace in honor and freedom. The Vietnam Alliance of National, Democratic, and Peace Forces advocates winning back South Vietnam's independence and sovereignty and demanding that the U.S. Government end the war, withdraw U.S. and allied troops from South Vietnam, abolish all U.S. military bases, and respect Vietnam's independence and sovereignty, as specified in the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam. South Vietnam's national independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity must be recognized and respected by all governments throughout the world. The Vietnam Alliance of National, Democratic, and Peace Forces is ready to discuss these problems with the U.S. Government.

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2. The South Vietnam National Liberation Front, a patriotic force, which has greatly contributed to the mobilization, organization, and leadership of the struggle against foreign invasion during past years, cannot be excluded from settlement of all problems in South Vietnam. We advocate contacts with the South Vietnam National Liberation Front to win back national independence, restore peace, reconstruct the country, and establish conditions for our people to lead to a life of happiness in freedom.

3. The political regime in South Vietnam will be a Republic. The people will live in true freedom and democracy. Such rights as freedom of speech, press, religion, movement, congregation, organization, foreign travel, and so forth, will be guaranteed. There will be no difference whatsoever in the treatment of individuals. All organs of state power will be elected by the people through just and honest elections. People of all walks of life, men as well as women, and all nationalities and religions will be represented in those organs of state power. All Vietnamese will be equal in all respects. The rights of our people living abroad will be cared for, and the legitimate rights of foreigners living in Vietnam will be respected. The economy of South Vietnam should be independent and prosperous. Agriculture should be developed, and business, industry, trade, and transportation should be encouraged in order to make the country prosperous. Workers' rights and those of people of all walks of life should be respected. An agrarian reform program should be carried out correctly in South Vietnam to form a basis for agricultural development and improve living conditions and purchasing power of our peasants and contribute to over-all development of the national economy. When peace is restored, the immediate measures to be taken are to heal war wounds and build and develop the economy. South Vietnam appeals to all countries that are not bound by any political conditions to assist her in terms of capital, technical aid, and specialists. Vietnam will try by all means to get rid of all the bad influence of the degrading culture and foster long-standing national traditions. Activities of social interest and education and examination systems should be fostered. Our compatriots belonging to ethnic minorities living in South Vietnam and old people, children, women, wounded and sick soldiers, and the disabled should be cared for.

4. South Vietnam will be an independent country with full sovereignty, observing the policy of a nonaligned country having relations with all countries regardless of their

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political systems, provided that those countries actually respect the independence and territorial integrity of Vietnam. South Vietnam has highly respected its friendship with the neighboring Cambodian and Laotian countries.

5. Concerning the problem of national unification: national unification is the earnest aspiration and social duty of all our people. In actuality, there are now two different political regimes in the two zones of our country. The problem of national unification cannot be settled at a moment's notice. Therefore, the two zones must discuss and negotiate between themselves on the basis of equality and respect for each other's characteristics with a view to advancing toward achieving national unification through peaceful means. Pending this unification, there must be relations between the two zones in the fields of economy, culture, correspondence, free movement, and so forth. Southern compatriots, regrouped in the north, will be free to return to the south in accordance with their desires. Conversely, Northern compatriots who went south will be free to return to the north." *(Douglas Pike, War, Peace, and the Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969), pp. 23-25.)*

late April-- The Presidium of the NLF Central Committee issues a statement on the formation of the Alliance of National, Democratic, and Peace Forces of Vietnam, which proclaims that the Front supports the political stand and program of action of the Alliance and is willing to join actions with it so that they may fight shoulder to shoulder for independence, democracy, peace, neutrality, prosperity and a free and happy life for all the people and for ultimate peaceful reunification of the homeland...The National Liberation Front of South Vietnam calls on all forces and all people who want to see the nation independent, free and living in peace and happiness to put the interests of the homeland above all other interests in these decisive hours of history, and to join the efforts of the Alliance and the Front. *(South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation, Documents (South Vietnam: Giai Phong Publishing House, 1968), pp. 106-07.)*

3 May-- On 4 May, Pravda and Izvestia announce: "The text of the May 3 statement by the D.R.V. Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning the level, place and time of an official conversation between the D.R.V. and the U.S.A. has been distributed in Hanoi. The D.R.V. government, the statement stresses, considers it is necessary to begin official conversation between Hanoi and Washington at once. The D.R.V. government has decided to appoint Minister Xuan Thuy as its representative at official conversation with the representative of the U.S. government in order to discuss with the American side the question of

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unconditional cessation by the United States of bombing and all other hostilities against the D.R.V., and subsequently to discuss other questions of interest to both sides." Tass reports that "President Johnson said at a press conference today that he has informed the D.R.V. that May 10 as the date and Paris as the place for holding preliminary meetings between the U.S.A. and the D.R.V. are acceptable to the United States." *("Meeting Will Be Held in Paris - Statements by DRV Foreign Ministry and President Johnson", trans. DES, Pravda, 4 May 1968, p. 1.)*

5 May-- A Pravda commentary lauds Hanoi's act of good will in agreeing to hold talks to end the bombing of North Vietnamese territory and to halt all other acts of war against the DRV. It claims: "Washington obviously did not expect such a turn of events and was caught unawares. American ruling circles resorted to tactics of red tape, distortion of the facts and verbal juggling. They advanced more and more new conditions, one after another, that delayed the organization of preliminary meetings..." It is also charged that, along with President Johnson's 31 March statement, "the air war against D.R.V. territory was simultaneously intensified, and new contingents of American soldiers were sent to South Vietnam." *(Aleksei Vasilyev, "Good Will of the DRV", trans. DES, Pravda, 5 May 1968, p. 5.)*

9 May-- Representative Evans of Colorado introduces into the Congressional Record a US State Department "Working Paper on the North Vietnamese Role in the War in South Vietnam". This report is said to be based upon a meticulous survey of the releaseable evidence of the North Vietnamese role in the conflict and is said to be further supported by "sensitive intelligence" that cannot be released. The paper concludes that Hanoi "was the driving force in bringing about the conflict from 1959 onward and in raising it to its successive dimensions at all stages. Likewise, the evidence seems conclusive that Hanoi had every intention of taking control over South Vietnam by one means or another from 1954 onward." Appended to the study is a table indicating the levels of infiltration of DRV Army regiments into South Vietnam from September 1964 up until June 1967. Also provided is a table of infiltration of personnel from North Vietnam, 1959-1967 (First Half), as follows:

Year	Confirmed	Probable	Possible	Total
1959-1960	4,556	26	---	5,582
1961	4,118	2,177	---	6,295
1962	5,362	7,495	---	12,857
1963	4,726	3,180	---	7,906
1964	9,316	3,108	---	12,424
1965	23,770	1,910	8,050	33,730
1966	44,300	10,500	30,000	84,800
1967 (First Half)	20,700	5,100	14,100	39,900

(Congressional Record, 9 May 1968, pp. H3604-10.)

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13 May-- At the first substantive session of the Paris negotiations (which formally began on 10 May), Xuan Thuy of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and W. Averell Harriman of the United States present their respective positions. The statement of Thuy notes that the purpose of the discussions is to attain the unconditional cessation of US bombing raids and other acts of war against the DRV and thereafter talk about any other problems which interest both sides. Thuy's long statement charges that Vietnam would have been unified since 20 July 1956 except for US actions and that the United States has been guilty of a long list of aggressions since the year 1954. Air and naval attacks against North Vietnam since August 1964, have been "monstrous crimes." He says: "The U.S. Government has always deliberately obscured the distinction between the aggressor and the victim of the aggression--presenting itself as the victim of aggression, whereas it is itself the aggressor--to conceal its unjust actions." Thus, there can be no "reciprocity" for the unconditional bombing halt. Thuy also claims that the National Liberation Front is the legal and genuine representative of the South Vietnamese people. He charges the United States with "right wing" aggression in Laos and with threatening Cambodia's independence and neutrality. He quotes criticisms of Senators Robert Kennedy and William Fulbright and of Dr. Martin Luther King with regard to the American war effort. He reiterates the DRV four-point stand, which is still Hanoi's official policy. In his statement, Harriman points out that President Johnson has substantially deescalated the bombing effort, without finding any indication that the North Vietnamese are matching this restraint. He declares that the essential elements of the 1954 Geneva Accords provide a basis for peace in Vietnam. He calls for respect for the DMZ as a genuine buffer. He accuses Hanoi of carrying out a sustained program of aggression and reiterates the fundamental principle that "the South Vietnamese people must be allowed to determine their own future wihtout outside interference." The United States also believes that the 1962 Geneva Agreement on Laos must be respected. Finally, Harriman suggests that the US would prefer to use its resources to support economic and social development in Southeast Asia. *(New York Times, 14 May 1968.)*

15 May-- DRV Chief Delegate to the Paris talks reiterates: "Allow me to recall that the U.S. Government, which unleashed the aggression, has to stop it. The U.S. Government has no right to demand any price from the Vietnamese people for the cessation of its aggression against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam... The stand of independence and peace of the Vietnamese people, still is the four points of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam Government and the political program of the South Vietnam

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National Front for Liberation. To reach a peaceful settlement of the Vietnam problem, the U.S. Government must first of all stop definitively and unconditionally the bombing raids and all other acts of war on the whole territory of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam...On its part, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam has shown its goodwill before the whole world by having appointed its representative to come here for official conversations with the representatives of the Government of the U.S.A. and we are ready to have serious conversations... But, so long as the U.S. continues its aggression and continues to infringe upon the sovereignty and territory of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the Vietnamese people have to resolutely resist." *(Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs, Mission to Hanoi (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), pp. 357-58.)*

19 May-- Pravda reiterates that the "chief goal" of the Paris discussions is "to determine with the American side an unconditional cessation of the bombing and all other American acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and after this to proceed to other questions of interest to both sides." However, it is noted, "no sooner had the Paris meetings begun than the American delegation, as though pretending it did not know why it had been sent to Paris, began talking about whatever it pleased but not about the complete and unconditional cessation of the bombing and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, without which the beginning of talks on other problems of interest to both sides is unthinkable... Evidently this is being done only to drag out the negotiations for as long a time as possible, to gain time for the preparation of military operations on a still broader scale and then, citing the 'intransigence' of the Vietnamese, to resume the bombing of the entire territory of the D.R.V. and again try for a military victory." *(Yuri Zhukov "The Aggressors Will Have to Go Back Whence They Came", trans. DES, Pravda, 19 May 1968, pp. 1, 4.)*

20 May-- Hanoi's official newspaper, Nhan Dan, states that the purpose of the discussions in Paris is to reach a complete bombing cessation before taking up "other problems of common concern for both sides." The paper accuses Ambassador Harriman of introducing extraneous questions in order to draw public attention away from the fact that the United States has the responsibility of halting the bombing and all other acts of war against North Vietnam. It says that other issues "will be discussed after the United States has stopped unconditionally the bombing and all other acts of war against North Vietnam. The United States cannot ask for any reciprocity or mutual deescalation. The United States is the aggressor and warmaker, so it must deescalate the war conditionally." *(Baltimore Sun, 21 May 1968, p. 2.)*

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24 May-- In a report to the DRV National Assembly (Third Legislature, Fourth Session), Pham Van Dong reiterates the DRV stand on such questions as the proper goals of the Paris talks, the issue of "reciprocity", Hanoi's 4-point stand and the political program of the NLF. He concludes from past experience that "[a]gainst U.S. imperialism...it is necessary to wage an unflinching, resolute, unyielding, uncompromising struggle in all possible forms, including the highest one—armed struggle. Such a struggle must of course be a long, hard one." He stresses that the "nearer we come to victory, the more hardships we meet. The fight ahead will be harder than ever." *(Pham Van Dong, Forward! Final Victory Will Be Ours! (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1968), pp. 23, 45, 52-53, 55.)*

26 May-- In a letter to the editor of the Washington Post, Professor Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. suggests that "it is still not clear whether the temporary North Vietnamese withdrawal from Khe Sanh was just a military response to American firepower or also a political response to Mr. Johnson's speech of March 31..." *(Washington Post, 26 May 1968.)*

28 May-- The Soviet Communist Party newspaper Pravda accuses the US of "clearly resorting to tactics of delay and procrastination, doing everything in its power to evade the speediest possible solution of the basic problem—that of the unconditional cessation of the bombing and all other acts of war against the D.R.V. At the same time, the representatives of the United States are raising questions that have no relation whatsoever to the Paris conversations and can on no account be considered at them...In particular, Averell Harriman, the chief representative of the U.S.A. at the official conversations in Paris, has repeatedly attempted to begin the discussion of questions bearing no relation to the current meetings in Paris, such as the situation in Cambodia and Laos...It is perfectly natural, therefore, that the Royal Government of Cambodia has issued a statement of protest in connection with the position taken by the U.S. delegation. The statement emphasizes the government's categorical objection to any references to Cambodia in the course of the American-Vietnamese negotiations, regarding such a position on the part of the U.S.A. as an infringement on Cambodia's sovereignty and neutrality, as a violation of the principles of international law. The information agency Kaosan Pathet-Lao, for its part, has declared that it regards the American side's introduction of the question of Laos into the Paris conversations as completely illegitimate... Through its provocational maneuvers, Washington is trying, as it were, to conceal the obvious fact that recently the machinations of the United States against neutral Cambodia and its

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armed interference in the affairs of Laos not only have not abated but have even intensified." *(Erick Alekseyev, "Provocational Maneuvers", trans. DES, Pravda, 28 May 1968, p. 5.)*

28 May-- After receiving a personal report from Ambassador Vance concerning the Paris discussions, President Johnson summons newsmen to the White House for a short press conference. He tells them that the North Vietnamese have sought to use the talks "to see if we could be pressured to stop the bombing completely in the southern panhandle of North Vietnam, without any compensatory action on their part. At the present time, they are pouring men and supplies through this area at an unprecedented rate. The supplies go directly to the battle in South Vietnam. We are destroying something over 20 percent of what is coming through to the South." The President remarks that the United States has already initiated a very substantial deescalation of the war: "We have withdrawn some 90 percent of their population from the area that we bombed and some 78 percent of the territory. We have stopped the bombing of the territory and population in North Vietnam." He again states the formula presented in his 31 March speech: "We have made it clear if North Vietnam responded, if they would show some similar restraint, we were prepared to make further decisions to try to reduce the violence." The Communists, however, have been using the talks as a vehicle for very wide-ranging propaganda. *(New York Times, 29 May 1968.)*

30 May-- In a prepared statement at a news conference at the LBJ Ranch, President Johnson reports that he had hoped that his "unilateral act of de-escalation" in which he had "lifted the bombing from most of the territory and population of North Vietnam including Hanoi and Haiphong" and his announcement that he would concentrate every resource at his command in the search for peace might bring the North Vietnamese authorities to the negotiating table. He says that although these talks have gotton underway in Paris, "I cannot report to the American people any substantive progress nor can I even report that Hanoi has matched our restraint with theirs." He continues: "But if Hanoi will take responsive action we are ready to go far and fast with them and with others to reduce the violence and to build a stable peace in Southeast Asia." After his prepared statement, President Johnson introduces General Westmoreland, who summarizes the situation in Vietnam and estimates that there are approximately 90,000 North Vietnamese soldiers in the South, with more arriving every day. *(New York Times, 31 May 1968.)*

3 June-- The DRV Foreign Ministry calls Souvanna Phouma's charge of North Vietnamese intervention in Laotian affairs a slanderous invention. The origin and cause of the current situation in Laos is said to be US intervention and aggression through

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the sabotage of the 1954 and 1962 Geneva Agreements. *(New York Times, 4 June 1968, p. 51.)*

4 June-- In a commencement address at Glassboro College nearly a year after the Glassboro Summit Conference, President Johnson calls for a willingness of the United States and the Soviet Union to travel together on the road to peace. He says that he has taken "a major act of de-escalation" in Vietnam to bring about talks on Southeast Asia but that the "other side has had nothing of substance to say to those of us who seek a just peace in Asia." In response to concrete American proposals, the North Vietnamese have offered only propaganda. The Communist representatives in Paris continue to deny the massive presence of DRV troops in South Vietnam. Finally, the North Vietnamese say only that the rest of the bombing must be halted at the very time when they are flooding more supplies and material into South Vietnam than ever before. He adds: "So, until the men in Hanoi face the real problems of ending the war--we must stand firm and fast. We must stand patiently and hopefully, but with determination, too." Speaking of possible peace steps that could be taken, he says: "We believe that there should be a realistic enforcement of the 1962 Geneva Accords on Laos. We believe that agreements solemnly made should be solemnly honored." *(New York Times, 5 June 1968.)*

10-26 June-- As the Paris talks bogged down, Communist policy statements took on the characteristics of a repetitious chanting of a monotonous liturgy. On 10 June, the NLF issued a statement on the Paris talks reaffirming its political programme as the basis for a peace settlement, supporting the DRV negotiating stance and defending the "sacred right" of the Vietnamese people to combat US aggression. On 26 June, the Front issues a "Statement on the South Vietnamese People's Inalienable Right to Intensify Their Struggle Against U.S. Aggression, For National Salvation and For the Liberation of South Viet Nam" which repeats its previous positions and specifically denies the "fantastic story" concocted by the enemy of the "massacre of civilians" by the Communists during the Tet Offensive and its aftermath. *(South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation, Documents (South Vietnam: Giai Long Publishing House, 1968), pp. 109-20.)*

15 June-- The Soviet Government organ Izvestia writes of the Paris discussions: "The behavior of the American delegation, headed by Averell Harriman, attests that U.S. ruling circles are seeking to obtain at the table of the Paris talks what they have been unable to achieve for several years now on the South Vietnam battlefields. In simpler terms, they would like the

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de facto capitulation of the Vietnamese people, embellished with meaningless 'peace' promises by the U.S. government. If this cannot be achieved, the talks on Avenue Kleber are to be made a propaganda supplement to armed aggression in Vietnam... The American side is trying in every way to avoid a direct answer to the demand by the D.R.V. that the bombing of its territory be halted as an indispensable prerequisite for the start of negotiations on all other questions of interest to both sides...At almost every regular meeting Harriman and his colleagues insist on so-called 'reciprocity,' i.e., to put it simply, they are demanding some concessions from the D.R.V. for a cessation of U.S. bombing...Everyone is well aware that American troops invaded South Vietnam, seeking to make it an outpost of American neocolonialism in Southeast Asia, and that the U.S.A. began unprovoked bombing of the D.R.V., making use of the so-called 'Tonkin [Gulf] incident,' which the American military clique itself created. The U.S.A. began the aggressive war against the Vietnamese people, and they must end it. What kind of 'reciprocity' can be discussed in these circumstances!" Moscow rejects US efforts to expand the subject matter of the talks to include Laos. In sum: "The results of the first month of the Paris talks lead to the conclusion that the U.S.A. does not want to stop the aggression against Vietnam...The 'peace' gesture in the form of 'restricting' the bombing of the D.R.V. was an attempt to quell mounting discontent with the White House's Vietnam policy among broad circles of the American public and to impede the election campaign of the presidential candidates from the opposition." *("After Eight Paris Talks", trans. DES, Izvestia, 15 June 1968, p. 3.)*

15 June-- Premier Souvanna Phouma reports that he had made an agreement with the DRV and the Pathet Lao in 1962 not to tell the Geneva Conference on Laos that North Vietnamese troops were operating in his country. In return, Hanoi had pledged to pull its forces out of Laos once the 1962 Accords were signed. Instead of complying with that agreement, he says, the North Vietnamese "opened a general offensive against neutralist positions..." *(New York Times, 16 June 1968, p. 10.)*

28 June-- Laotian Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma at a news conference in Paris, calls for the withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops from Laos before the bombing of North Vietnam is stopped. He says: "If you stop the bombing of North Vietnam without withdrawal of the North Vietnamese troops from Laos, how could the United States ever accept that? It would leave the western flank uncovered." He estimates that North Vietnam now has "40,000 troops in Laos permanently...not counting the troops passing through" to South Vietnam. "The presence of these

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40,000 troops has obliged us to maintain an army of 100,000 which is an enormous quantity for a country which has barely three million inhabitants." Once a cease-fire has been achieved in Paris, he visualizes a "general conference" of "all the interested parties" on the conflict in Southeast Asia. As for Laos itself, it should be provided with an expanded and effective International Control Commission which should enforce the neutrality that was pledged in 1954 and 1962. The existing tripartite membership should be expanded to five nations, with authority to operate by majority vote. He says the present procedure gives each member a veto and means that the ICC members "live very well" but "they don't do much work." He adds that if the North Vietnamese withdraw from Laos, "the Pathet Lao ministers can return to the seats [in the Royal Laotian Government] which have been left vacant for them and we can then discuss the need to reaffirm the Geneva Agreements." *(Washington Post, 29 June 1968, p. 1.)*

3 July-- Although Senators opposed to the war in Vietnam are questioning privately whether the Thai Division should be moved to Vietnam, the State Department announces that the deployment will be carried out as scheduled before President Johnson made his bid on 31 March. It points to continuing North Vietnamese infiltrations during the Paris negotiations. *(Philadelphia Inquirer, 4 July 1968, p. 2.)*

6-7 July-- Tokyo Yomiuri, in a two-part article based on an interview with a press spokesman for the Alliance of National, Democratic, and Peace Forces, reports the official Alliance self-portrait, as follows: "I hope that you understand the history and the nature of the Alliance. The United States and the Thieu-Ky traitors drove the people to death and devastated the land. In the face of this miserable situation, the intellectuals, the younger generation, the progressive bourgeoisie, and the progressive elements of various political parties and religious groups sought measures to restore peace. These non-Communist nationalists and patriots, who do not belong to the Liberation Front...decided to cooperate with the NFLSV in order to achieve peace. The National, Democratic, and Peace Forces in various districts have inaugurated revolutionary committees or revolutionary organs of power to control administrative work in the newly liberated areas. For instance, revolutionary committees were formed in almost all the villages and hamlets in Thua Thien Province during the heroic resistance in Hue for a month by the Liberation forces at the time of the Tet offensive (1968), revolutionary committees were formed in 170 villages in the Delta district. Thus, revolutionary committees are being formed

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one after another throughout the country under the guidance of the National, Democratic, and Peace Forces...The Alliance consists of South Vietnamese nationalists. Their greatest task is the restoration of peace. The Alliance hopes that Vietnam will become an independent, neutral, prosperous, democratic country. Furthermore, South Vietnam will be a democratic, non-Communist, neutral country, independent of North Vietnam, for the time being after the restoration of peace...The Alliance is completely independent of the Liberation Front. The Alliance calls for democracy, neutrality, and non-communism. The political platform of the Liberation Front will not force communism on South Vietnam. The Alliance has decided to cooperate with the Liberation Front just because the platform is compatible with the desires of the South Vietnamese people. The alliance will become the sole political medium to create a peaceful political system on the basis of military power of the Liberation Front. Meanwhile, the Liberation Front will aid the Alliance with its military power for the restoration of peace." *(Douglas Pike, War, Peace, and the Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969), pp. 21-22.)*

mid-July-- The trial in absentia of leaders of the Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces conducted by RVN on 12 July touched off a barrage of VC broadcasts in which the trials were branded as "farcical", and Alliance officers under sentence declared their distain of the proceedings. *(Viet-Nam: Documents and Research Notes, no. 42 (Saigon: US Mission, Vietnam, 1968), p. 2.)*

20 July-- Upon returning to Washington from South Vietnam, Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford refers to speculation that the present lull in enemy activity might be a Communist response to the American initiative in halting the bombing of the North. Clifford says that "we are unable to ascertain any connection" between the slowdown in enemy fighting and the Paris peace talks. He tells newsmen that the lull "would appear to be a period in which they are refitting, regrouping, and rearming" in preparation for a new offensive. *(Washington Star, 21 July 1968, p. 8.)*

21 July-- Following their meetings in Honolulu on 19 and 20 July, President Johnson and President Nguyen Van Thieu issue a joint communique which declares that their common objectives are those stated in the Manila Declaration of 1966. Reviewing the situation, the two Presidents note the tremendous losses sustained by the Communists in their February and May offensives. They state that enemy losses are being replaced by North Vietnamese infiltrations, rather than by local recruitment, the result being that it appears that the North Vietnamese now comprise over 70 percent of the main force battalion strength as compared to 26 percent in late 1965. They report a massive

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infiltration through Laos and observe that the pattern of military activity continues to indicate renewed Communist offensive action at some time in the next two months. They state: "Military factors--enemy regrouping and effective allied spoiling actions--appear to account for the drop in the level of fighting over the last two to three weeks, including the lull in indiscriminate attacks on the civilian population in Saigon." The two Presidents claim that the Paris talks have resulted in no DRV response to the American bombing limitation and that Hanoi appears to be following a policy of "fighting while negotiating". *(New York Times, 20 July 1968.)*

26 July-- Premier Souvanna Phouma reverses his previous position by suggesting in a news conference at the Laotian embassy in Paris that the United States stop all bombing of North Vietnam in response to the lull in combat in South Vietnam and Laos, which he interprets as "a sign of goodwill" from Hanoi. *(New York Times, 27 July 1968, p. 4.)*

30 July-- In a press conference, Secretary of State Rusk says that the Communists are preparing for a renewed offensive in South Vietnam. He suggests that the current lull in ground fighting and lack of recent rocket attacks on Saigon are not adequate signals of DRV deescalation. "I see no reason why," he says, "if there are political decisions made on the other side, they cannot find ways to let us know what these political decisions are." He says that such information should come "from some authoritative source" and could be "direct or indirect." He adds that about 30 percent of the DRV trucks headed south are destroyed or damaged enroute under the current bombing rules. *(Washington Post, 31 July 1968, p. 1.)*

31 July-- On 14 August, Radio Liberation announces that a second conference of delegates of the Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces was held on 30-31 July "to consider the development of the political, military and economic situation since early Spring." At that conference, a political program was issued which, like the April manifesto, included three main planks—national salvation, national reconstruction and national reunification. The program bears a rather striking resemblence to that issued by the NLF in August of the previous year, both in substance and in tone. The following points are included in its text:

"1. --National Salvation: Unite all patriotic forces and individuals in resolutely opposing the aggressive war, overthrowing the lackey puppet regime, setting up a national coalition government and regaining independence, democracy and peace.

A --National salvation is a common undertaking of the entire people and the strength to insure its success is that

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of the all-people great solidarity bloc. The Viet-Nam Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces advocates the solidarity of all patriotic forces and individuals, regardless of political tendency, nationality, religious belief, or social origin in the present phase of struggle for independence and national sovereignty as well as in the future phase of national reconstruction.

B --The South Vietnamese people are eager for peace -- a peace in honor and freedom. The Viet-Nam Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces advocates the regaining of independence and sovereignty for South Viet-Nam, demanding that the U.S. Government end the war, withdraw all the troops of the United States and its allies from South Viet-Nam, dismantle all U.S. military bases and respect Viet-Nam's independence and sovereignty as stipulated by the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Viet-Nam. South Viet-Nam's national independence and sovereignty and territorial integrity must be recognized and respected by all the governments in the world. The Viet-Nam Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces is ready to discuss these problems with the U.S. Government.

C --The South Viet-Nam National Liberation Front, a patriotic force having made great contributions to the task of mobilizing, organizing and leading the anti-aggression struggle during the past years, cannot be absent from the settlement of problems concerning South Viet-Nam. The Viet-Nam Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces advocates contacts and debates with the NLFSV in order to cooperate with it in regaining national independence, restoring peace, building the country and bringing a free and happy life to the entire people.

On the basis of the united action of patriotic forces and individuals participating in the national liberation task, including the patriotic individuals in the lackey administration and army, it is necessary to set up an enlarged democratic, national coalition government composed of representatives of people of all strata, nationalities, religious and political groups, progressive political parties and patriotic notables, with a view to achieving independence, democracy, peace, neutrality and prosperity for all South Viet-Nam.

2. --National Reconstruction: To build South Viet-Nam into an independent, free, democratic, peaceful, neutral and prosperous state. After winning back independence, sovereignty and peace for the country, the Viet-Nam Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces advocates

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always uniting with patriotic forces and individuals in order to heal war wounds, to achieve national reconstruction and to build South Viet-Nam into an independent, sovereign, free, democratic, peaceful, neutral and prosperous state.

A --Internal Affairs

(1) Political Regime: To eradicate all vestiges of the colonial regimes, old and new, in South Viet-Nam; to overthrow the entire lackey, puppet administration; to disband the Senate and House of Representatives set up by fraudulent and deceitful elections; to abolish the Constitution drafted by the previous constituent National Assembly; not to recognize any treaty signed between the puppet South Vietnamese administration and foreign countries -- treaties which are illegal and unequal and run counter to national interests and world peace; to abolish all people-betraying and country-harming laws enacted by the puppets and all decree-laws, decrees and court sentences of the puppets, which unreasonably and illegally violate the citizens' lives, property, dignity and other interests; to establish a truly democratic and free republican regime; and to organize general elections in accordance with the principles of equality, universal, direct suffrage, and a secret ballot in order to elect a constituent National Assembly that truly represents the people.

This National Assembly will work our a democratic Constitution which fully embodies the aspirations and interests of the people. The Constitution will set forth conditions for establishing and organizing a healthy and truly democratic state structure of broad national coalition character. All citizens will enjoy equality in all respects. The people will enjoy all truly democratic freedoms: freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religious belief, freedom of movement, freedom of assembly, freedom of association, freedom to travel abroad and so forth. There will be no discriminatory treatment of any citizen. Inviolability of the human person, freedom of residence and secrecy of correspondence will be respected for all citizens. The inviolability of National Assembly deputies will be guaranteed. All persons detained under any form by the U.S. and lackey authorities in South Viet-Nam on account of their patriotic activities or of their opposition tendencies will be set free. Those who have been sent into exile or have fled to foreign countries because of the lackey administration's terrorist and repressive policy are free to return to the country.

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To re-examine all inappropriate verdicts pronounced in violation of common rights in order to grant amnesty or reduce sentences; to exercise equality among men and women in the political, economic, cultural and social fields; to exercise equality among religions and not show favoritism for any religion; to oppose all the divisive plots of the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys; to protect and rehabilitate or repair all pagodas, churches, holy sees and temples that were destroyed by enemy bombs and bullets; to exercise a policy of solidarity and equality among all nationalities in the Vietnamese national community; to care for overseas Vietnamese compatriots' interests, encourage and create conditions for overseas Vietnamese compatriots to return to the Fatherland and engage in national reconstruction; to respect the legitimate interests of foreigners residing in South Viet-Nam, and abolish the U.S.-puppet policy of assimilating Chinese residents through pressure.

All the units or individual officers, troops, policemen and civil servants of the southern puppet administration who have carried out patriotic acts and engaged in the struggle to oppose the U.S. war of aggression and the puppet lackey regime through uprisings, military revolts, deserting the enemy ranks, returning to the people with weapons and singlemindedly supporting the South Vietnamese people's struggle for independence, democracy and peace, or all those who did not carry out these acts but still refused to execute enemy orders that were harmful to the people, will be acclaimed, will have their achievements registered and will be commended, rewarded and well-treated accordingly. Those who have committed crimes against the people and have repented and sincerely returned to the people will be forgiven. Those who earned merits to compensate for past faults will be rewarded accordingly. After independence is wrested back, those who want to continue to serve in the new administrative machinery will be accepted and none will be favored more than others.

(2) Economic Regime: To build an independent, self-governing economy, which will not be subordinated to the U.S. imperialists or any country. After peace is restored, to do our utmost to care for and heal all the wounds caused by war, solve the danger of unemployment and restore the people's normal life on the basis of strongly developing the economy and making the country prosperous. To respect and protect the citizens' right of ownership of the means of production and other property, to pay attention to creating conditions for rehabilitating and developing agricultural production, carry out a credit policy to loan money to the people for the cultivation of crops, improve technology, develop irrigation networks,

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carry out a price policy, encourage agricultural production and finely solve the consumption of agricultural products.

To carry out an equitable and rational agrarian reform, create bases to develop agriculture and reduce rent. On the basis of negotiation, and based on a certain limit of acreage, the Government will buy surplus acreage from landlords, and parcel it out to peasants who have no land or not enough land to cultivate. To recognize the ownership of land which the NLFSV has parcelled out to peasants for the needs of the resistance. As for the land of absentee landlords which the NLFSV has parcelled out to peasants, it will be re-examined according to the political attitudes of these landlords to find a reasonable solution.

To respect the legal ownership of land by churches, pagodas and holy sees. To encourage the management of plantations growing industrial crops and fruit trees. To restore and develop the handicraft industry and commerce. To carry out a policy of free trade useful to the country and people and encourage transportation, industry and commerce enterprises aimed at making the people rich and the country powerful. To eliminate monopolies. To encourage the production and consumption of home-made products. To build a system of stable and independent currency. To bring about an equitable tax policy. To broaden the market at home and abroad. To realize economic exchanges with the North so that the two parts of our country may support and assist each other to develop. To promote commercial relations with foreign countries. To appeal for economic and technological aid, for capital and specialists from all foreign countries regardless of their political or social systems, on the basis of equality and mutual interests, without any mandatory conditions, but based on the respect of the independence and sovereignty of South Viet-Nam.

In the development of the economy, to care for the laboring people, workers and civil servants, promulgate labor laws and provisions safeguarding the interests of government and private employees. To improve living conditions in laboring people's housing areas and alleys, carrying out the policy of mutual interest between capitalist people and laboring people.

(3) Policy on Culture, Education, Science, Technology and Public Health: To eliminate all influences of deficient, degenerating, and mixed cultures. To build a progressive and national educational culture, and make efforts to develop the fine traditions of our ancient national culture. To safeguard and

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develop good morals and customs. To make efforts to raise the level of culture of the people. To solve illiteracy. To build more schools of each level. To open courses for cultural and professional improvement. To create conditions leading to compulsory education. To develop science and technology to serve life, national construction and protection of the country. To reform the whole system of study and examinations. To use Vietnamese as the teaching language in all branches of the universities. To cultivate and take care of qualified people. To secure occupations for graduate students. To exempt private schools from taxation and reduce tuition for school and university students. To eliminate fees and grant scholarships to poor students in schools and universities. To help intellectuals in scientific, technical and cultural branches, and artists by providing conditions to develop study, creativity and inventiveness. To improve the system of going abroad for study, aimed at serving national construction. To care for the health of the people. To develop public health services. To improve existing hospitals and build more hospitals, maternity wards and dispensaries in cities and in the countryside so as to broadly serve the masses, and at the same time give impetus to movements of hygiene and disease prevention, and realize a new life for the people. To bring about cultural relations with the North and advance to establishing cultural relations with foreign countries.

(4) Social Relief Policy: To pay the greatest attention possible to social interests and to take care of the lives and health of old people, women, wounded and sick combatants, orphans, disabled people and others. To eradicate social ills, which are detrimental to human dignity and to the health of women, and to provide relief for the compatriot victims of the war, including the needy families of the puppet army soldiers.

B --Foreign Relations: To carry out a foreign policy of peace, non-alignment with any bloc and non-affiliation with any military alliance. To establish diplomatic relations with all nations, regardless of their political regimes, on the principle of equality, mutual respect for one another's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-intervention in one another's internal affairs and peaceful coexistence. To attach special importance

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to friendly relations with our neighboring countries, Cambodia and Laos. To develop friendly relations with nationalist countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. To positively support the national independence movement conducted by the peoples of various Asian, African and Latin America countries. To make a positive contribution to the protecting of peace and security in Southeast Asia and in the world. To expand trade relations with foreign countries and to call upon other countries to provide South Viet-Nam with economic assistance according to the principle of equality, mutual benefit and no strings attached, and on the basis of respect for the independence and sovereignty of South Viet-Nam. To establish cultural relations with foreign countries.

3. --The Problem of National Reunification: The Governments of the South and the North will conduct negotiations conducive to the peaceful reunification of the Fatherland. To reunify the country is the earnest aspiration and sacred duty of our people. At present, our country has in fact two different political systems in the South and the North. National reunification cannot be achieved overnight. Therefore, the South and the North should hold talks on the basis of equality and respect for the characteristics of each zone, in order to proceed toward the peaceful reunification of the country.

Since the country has not yet been reunified, it is necessary to establish economic, cultural and postal relations and to allow movement between the two parts of the country. The southern compatriots regrouped to the North and the northern compatriots evacuated to the South will be free to return to or remain in either part of the country in accordance with their desires.

To allow businessmen and producers in the South and the North to move freely between the two parts of the country to do business and to exchange raw materials and goods, in order to make the Vietnamese economy develop rapidly and become prosperous. To exchange educational, scientific, technical, literary and artistic information between the two parts of the country. To exchange delegations of professors and scientific, technical, literary and artistic cadres between the two parts of the country, in order to exchange experiences and develop education, science, technology and culture. College students in the two parts of the country will be free to enroll in various university facilities in either part of the country in accordance with their desires..." *(Viet-Nam: Documents and Research Notes, no. 42, (Saigon: US Mission, 1968), pp. 4-7.)*

31 July-- In the course of a news conference, President Johnson is asked to comment on whether or not the San Antonio Formula

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now requires the DRV to provide "some kind of formal commitment" before the bombing of North Vietnam will be halted. The President replies that the Communists have rejected the San Antonio Formula, and that "[s]ince then--in the March 31 speech --we have made the additional proposals which brought us to the conference table in Paris. Those negotiations are now going on there." He notes that the United States knows that "[t]he number of North Vietnamese soldiers now entering South Vietnam at the end of the Ho Chi Minh Trail is now greater than at any other time in this war. We estimated that 30,000 or more North Vietnamese soldiers entered South Vietnam in July. We estimate that even more...will come in August." This would seem to indicate that the enemy is preparing for a massive attack. He goes on to say: "We were hopeful on March 31 and we are still hopeful that the substantial act of restraint against the enemy that we took would be matched by some similar acts of restraint on their part. But the regroupings and rebuilding...makes us discouraged and we would hope the enemy offensive which seems imminent could be aborted. I cannot ignore this evidence. I cannot order the cessation of further unilateral acts of bombing of the infiltration routes that are leading toward our men--which are crowded today with men and war materials that the enemy needs. I cannot just step aside and leave our men in the lurch. Everyone, I think, is clear on one thing: We are prepared to halt the bombing when we feel confident that the halt in the bombing will not lead to the loss of heavy American and Allied casualties. More than that I cannot do, and more than that you should not have me do." *(New York Times, 1 August 1968.)*

August-- In the course of a review of US "defeats" in Vietnam, the Soviet-oriented World Marxist Review reveals that a new economic and military aid agreement has been concluded between the USSR and the DRV early the preceding month. The article also criticizes the Johnson Administration for attempting to negotiate in Paris "from a position of strength." It recalls: "About a month before the Paris talks opened, the war's biggest U.S. operation was launched under the code name, 'Complete Victory.' Simultaneously, U.S. air and naval forces intensified the bombardment of DRV territory. At the beginning of July, the Okinawa-based B-52 bombers were sent into action against North Vietnam for the first time in the war." *(Jan Prazsky, "U.S. Setbacks in Vietnam", World Marxist Review, XI, no. 8 (August 1968), pp. 27-29.)*

2-9 August-- An American newsman is told by an authoritative DRV source (later revealed to be Colonel Ha Van La, of the Paris negotiating delegation) that the reduced level of military activity in South Vietnam since May 1968 constitutes a deescalation of the war on the Communist side, which the United States has ignored. On 9 August, DRV sources do not disavow this claim, but they say that the press is making too much out of it. They reiterate their old position that the United States has no right to expect any deescalation in return for ending the bombing.

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(Washington Post, 3 August 1968; The New York Times, 4 August 1968; The New York Times, 10 August 1968, p. 1.)

5 August-- An NLF spokesman remarks that the "limited bombing" of North Vietnam, "while reflecting the losing and weakening position of the United States and its henchmen on the Viet Nam battlefield, is a cunning move to soothe public opinion." The US must unconditionally stop the bombing of North Vietnam. The NLF has every right to receive assistance from the northern compatriots and friends abroad. *(South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation (South Viet Nam: Giai Phong Publishing House, 1968), pp. 139-41.)*

19 August-- President Johnson tells the national convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars that the US will not halt the bombing of North Vietnam "until it has reason to believe that the other side intends seriously to join with us in deescalating the war and moving seriously toward peace." He claims that a unilateral end to the bombing would jeopardize American forces along the DMZ. The President calls for a peace settlement based on: 1. the restoration of the DMZ to its proper status; 2. the withdrawal of American forces from South Vietnam in accordance with the Manila Declaration of October 1966; and 3. a political settlement in South Vietnam based on the one-man, one-vote principle. *(91st Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam, (5th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1969), pp. 64-65.)*

27 August-- RVN President Nguyen Van Thieu says that recent Communist attacks in South Vietnam were aimed at American public opinion and particularly at the Democratic National Convention meeting in Chicago. He states: "We will never talk to the Front. We are willing to talk to Hanoi." As to VC participation in future elections, he declares: "I would never accept any Communist to run in an election in Vietnam. When we say one man, one vote, we mean the vote would only be given to Vietnamese citizens who deserve it." *(91st Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam, (5th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1969), p. 65.)*

September-- The Soviet-oriented World Marxist Review charges that President Johnson's "search for a peaceful solution" centers on stepping up the war. It points to the July Honolulu meeting with RVN President Thieu as demonstrating Johnson's "desire to consolidate in South Vietnam at any price..." *(Jan Prazsky, "Washington: Talk of Peace and Plans of Escalation", World Marxist Review, XI, no. 9 (September 1968), p. 30.)*

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2 September-- In a speech delivered at a reception given by the North Vietnamese Ambassador to Peking to celebrate the DRV's National Day, Premier Chou En-lai says that "[b]y their victories in the war against U.S. aggression and for national salvation, the Vietnamese people have made important contributions to the struggle of the people of the world against U.S. imperialism." In spite of this praise, however, Chou offers an oblique warning to the Vietnamese comrades, noting that their struggle will surely be successful "so long as they perservere in a protracted war and oppose capitulationism and compromise." [Emphasis added] *(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 37, 9 September 1968, pp. 4, 37.)*

1968-- General Van Tien Dung, who is Chief of Staff of the North Vietnamese Army, in an article entitled "People's War Against Air War of Destruction" assesses the American bombing effort. He says:

"1) The US war of destruction against North Vietnam is a new-type war. It is not a separate war, but part of the US war of aggression against South Vietnam, conditioned by the evolution of the aggressive war in South Vietnam and aimed at staving off US defeat on the South Vietnam battlefield...

The US imperialists are fully aware of the role of socialist North Vietnam, the revolutionary base of the whole country, the great rear of the South Vietnam revolutionary war...

The concrete objectives of the US war of destruction against North Vietnam are as follows:

—To shake the determination to fight US aggression...of our people in both zones;

—To prevent North Vietnam's assistance to South Vietnam, bolster up the morale of the puppet army and administration, isolate and stamp out the South Vietnam revolutionary war;

—To sabotage North Vietnam's socialist construction, weaken her economic and national defence potential...

2) By waging their war of destruction against North Vietnam, the US aggressors have undoubtedly made an enormous blunder. As an aftermath of their losing and passive position in South Vietnam, their war of destruction in North Vietnam right at the start has been stamped with the mark of passivity and failure on the strategic plane. It carries in itself many very fundamental weaknesses.

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Political weakness has proved fatal to the US war of destruction, because it is tying down and considerably restricting US military strength, which is not unlimited.

By creating an infamous precedent of unprovoked attack against a country of the socialist camp—a sovereign nation which has never done any harm to the United States—the US imperialists have been driven into most serious political isolation. From this state of things has emerged a law of the war of destruction: the more the US widens its military activities and the higher it escalates, the more it is isolated politically.

Consequently the US cannot deploy massively its ultramodern air and naval forces in a surprise, lightning and large-scale attack so as to inflict big losses on us. The criminal that US imperialism is has had to 'escalate' rung by rung, trembling and probing, now escalating and now de-escalating, constantly finding himself in a state of perplexity and passivity. The modern US air force, with its very expensive up-to-date jet planes of different types, designed for a large-scale nuclear war, has had to wage a completely different war for which it is completely unprepared. It must use scattered forces to strike again and again at thousands of small targets which are constantly on the move. Hence its inability to make full use of all combat methods in which it excels and to bring into full play the functional, tactical and technical capacities of its modern weapons and technical means. The longer it fights, the more the US air force proves incapable of fulfilling the tasks assigned to it and the heavier the losses it sustains.

US attacks against the North have been aimed at improving US situation in the South. The more the US fails in the South the more it feels the need to step up attacks on the North, which causes it heavier and heavier losses and aggravates its passiveness in both zones of Vietnam. This is another fact which assumes the character of a law in the war of destruction.

Thus, owing to the disastrous decision to use the air war of destruction in North Vietnam to retrieve the losing ground war in South Vietnam—the main battlefield—, the US has been forced to scatter its air and naval forces over a new theatre, which has made it impossible for it to concentrate its forces to support its ground operations in the main theatre. US passiveness and failure on one battlefield has thus been extended to many battlefields. Drawing the balance-sheet of US failure in Vietnam. Maxwell Taylor admitted that no issue concerning the Vietnam situation had provoked such protracted quarrels and discussions as the bombing of North Vietnam.

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3) The US war of destruction in North Vietnam, however, has not always evolved in a one-way direction according to the rule that the more the US fails in the South the harder it strikes at the North. The point is whether or not the US is able to continue its escalation indefinitely.

Reality has shown that because it has escalated its war from a losing position and sustained ever more defeats in the process, the US cannot escalate indefinitely.

Its forces being not unlimited—as shown by the realities of the war—and being moreover subjected to ever heavier losses in both parts of Vietnam, once the political goals of the neo-colonialist aggressive war in Vietnam show no chance of ever being attained despite the deployment of an unforeseen enormous military force, and once continued escalation has proved incapable of solving anything, the US must either change its goals or de-escalate.

This trend found a clear expression in Johnson's decision on a 'limited bombing' of North Vietnam as from March 31, 1968. This decision was in no way motivated by any 'restraint' on his part or by anything other than US heavy military and political failures...

Then in the first wave of their general offensive, the South Vietnam armed forces and people in the early days of Spring 1968 dealt such heavy blows at the US air force that even now it has not been replenished. For several consecutive months, the USAF's capacity to attack North Vietnam dropped visibly. As a matter of fact, with its war efforts at the present level, the US is meeting with growing difficulties and is hardly in a position to attack North Vietnam with the same fury as in the past. The US has to concentrate its remaining forces on a given sector in order to effectively prevent North Vietnam's assistance to South Vietnam and give an efficient support to the US and puppet troops on the South Vietnam battlefields in their desperate defensive efforts in the current phase of the general offensive and widespread uprisings of the South Vietnam revolutionary war. So, Johnson's announcement of 'limited bombing' of North Vietnam was, in the final analysis, only a public confession of the abysmal military failure of the US and the limited power of the USAF on the battlefront. It also revealed the tremendous political failure of the US imperialists in face of the increasing pressure of public opinion in the US and the world for a permanent and unconditional halt to the bombing and all other acts of war by the US against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam."
(Text in Nguyen Khac Vien, ed., "American Failure", Vietnamese Studies, no. 20 (December 1968), pp. 65-72.)

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16-20 September-- Radio Hanoi broadcasts a 5-part speech by Truong Chinh, the third ranking member of the Lao Dong Politburo, entitled "Let Us Be Grateful to Karl Marx and Follow the Path Traced by Him". Viet-Nam: Documents and Research Notes, no. 42, contains a summary and analysis of the speech which:

"...consists of a review of the career and doctrines of Karl Marx as an 'ardent revolutionary and the founder of scientific Communism'; and a much longer portion in which the speaker explores the question: 'How has our Party applied Marxism-Leninism in Viet-Nam?'

In this latter portion Truong Chinh asserts that the Party, under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh, had applied Marxism-Leninism correctly, and had 'led the Vietnamese revolution to advance steadily.' More importantly, it is in this portion of his speech that Truong Chinh advances his own view of the correct application of Marx's teachings to present and future conditions in North and South Viet-Nam.

Here he refers to the rigorous agrarian reforms which he, as First Secretary of the Party, had himself directed, and whose great unpopularity resulted in his loss of the post in 1956. He says: '...the management of economy and of the market has been somewhat amiss...The management of land under collective ownership...has run into deviations and errors.' Therefore, he adds, '...we must pay attention to the consolidation of the composition of the socialist economy -- state economy and collective economy...'

'To do all these things means...to consolidate the big rear of the resistance against U.S. aggression for national salvation.

Consolidation of the rear must be accompanied by a strengthening of the Party's political base. 'The political organizations of the masses are a foundation for the people's armed forces', Truong Chinh says. 'Only if things are done in this way will the fish -- the people's armed forces -- have the water -- the mass material bases in which to swim.'

While these essentials are being assured there can be only one correct strategy for winning the revolutionary struggle, he declares; the statement of that strategy is the theme of Truong Chinh's speech: 'We must...grasp the motto of Long-drawn out fight and relying mainly on one's self.'

Truong Chinh thus rejects the strategy of the all-out offensive with which Le Duan had been associated, and of which the Tet 1968 offensive is the most striking example. It is, moreover, a flexible strategy which requires that:

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1) 'We must constantly and accurately aim at the real, immediate enemy and not at the enemy in general.';

2) 'We must take advantage of the internal contradictions among the enemy ranks to divide them to a high degree/as we are/ currently taking advantage of the contradictions between the doves and the hawks in the American ruling class...';

3) '...at times, under certain circumstances, we must shift to the defensive to gain time, dishearten the enemy, and build up our forces to prepare for a new offensive.'

Truong Chinh's present analysis is thoroughly consistent with his earlier writings. Throughout his speech will be found passages which in only slightly different words repeat thoughts he expressed in 1947...

Though the exact date of the speech is given neither in the text nor in subsequent commentaries, a Radio Hanoi broadcast of August 23, 1968 said that its presentation had been followed by 'several sessions of heated debate.' It is safe to assume that the August 23 broadcast marked the approximate date of the resolution of the debate; broadcast of the full text was begun some three weeks later.

Newspaper reports in October officially called the speech 'a new contribution to the treasury of theoretical works on the Vietnamese revolution.'" *(Viet-Nam: Documents and Research Notes, no. 51 (Saigon: US Mission, 1969), pp. 1-2.)*

28-30 September-- The NLF and Hanoi send greetings to China on its National Day. The messages stress that the founding of the People's Republic brought about a change in the world balance of forces favorable to the socialist states and the oppressed peoples. Support is voiced for China's nuclear weaponry accomplishments, and thanks is given for Peking's aid to the Vietnamese people. *(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 41, 7 October 1968, pp. 25-26.)*

October-- The Soviet-oriented World Marxist Review scans the military situation in Vietnam. It claims that the "nature of the war has changed sharply. The freedom fighters are on the offensive, forcing the enemy to passive defense. The war has been carried to the enemy's rear..." It demands the "unconditional cessation of the U.S. bombing and all other acts of war against North Vietnam. Once this was achieved, the two sides could discuss other issues..." However, in reality "the war is being escalated. The U.S. Airforce is expanding its attacks on

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towns and villages. President Johnson's order to 'restrict' the bombing has but led to continuous and intensified attacks on a sizeable part of the DRV, from Thanh Hoa to the Demilitarized Zone. The bombings in this area are three times more intensive than the 'pre-restriction' attacks on the whole of North Vietnam...The fact is that all the American talk about a 'settlement,' and the meetings in Paris, are meant to lull public opinion at home and abroad while continuing to build up American strength in South Vietnam. By mid-August, the U.S. had 543,000 men there, not counting the 35,000 complement of the 7th Fleet, 68,000 satellite troops and about 800,000 in the Saigon army...But the Pentagon is demanding more; its sights are set on a 750,000 U.S. force by mid-1969 and increased satellite forces." *(Jan Prazsky, "Vietnam: Harder Blows at the Aggressor", World Marxist Review, XI, no. 10-11 (October-November 1968), pp. 29-30.)*

25 October-- Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford asserts that President Johnson has ordered no slackening of the American military effort in Vietnam. He estimates that Hanoi has withdrawn 30-40,000 troops from South Vietnam but that 80,000 still remain. *(91st Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (5th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1969), p. 65.)*

31 October-- President Johnson announces that the United States will halt "all air, naval, and artillery bombardment of North Vietnam" as of 8:00 a.m. (Washington time), 1 November. Following this announcement, US officials indicate that Washington will continue to bomb Communist supply lines in Laos and send reconnaissance planes over North Vietnam. This same day, Saigon officials express their displeasure with the bombing halt decision. *(91st Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (5th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1969), p. 66.)*

1-2 November-- On 1 November, the DRV delegation at Paris issues a communique which states that Ambassadors Harriman and Vance have revealed to North Vietnamese negotiator Xuan Thuy that President Johnson has issued an order "to stop all air, naval, and artillery bombardment and all other acts involving the use of force on the entire territory of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam..." The communique further declares that "a meeting including the representatives of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation, the United States, and the Republic of Vietnam will be held in Paris, not earlier than November 6, 1968." US Secretary of State Dean Rusk notes at a news conference that the

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next step is up to Hanoi: "We have made our move, now you make yours." He asserts that the US stopped the bombing of North Vietnam "upon specific expectations that the Government of South Vietnam will participate in the discussion of an honorable peace and that the action will bring about a de-escalation of the fighting." When asked whether Washington had acted "on more than an assumption," Rusk responds in the affirmative. The following day, however, President Thieu informs the RVN National Assembly that his Government will not attend the 6 November meeting because its conditions were not fulfilled. *(91st Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (5th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1969), p. 66.)*

2-3 November-- The Government of the DRV issues a statement on the unconditional cessation of the bombing of North Vietnam which declares: "Confronted with an irremediable situation in Viet Nam and tremendous difficulties arising from the Viet Nam war, and under the pressure of world and American opinion, the United States Government has been forced to announce the complete cessation of air, naval and artillery bombardments against the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam...[This] constitutes a great victory of the Vietnamese people in both zones. It is also a great victory of the socialist camp, the national-liberation movement and the peace movement, a great victory of the people throughout the world, including progressive people in the United States...After the unconditional ending of bombardments by the United States on the entire territory of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, the D.R.V.N. Government will discuss with the American side 'other problems of concern to the two sides' with a view to a political settlement of the Vietnamese problem." The Saigon Government is to be included in these talks. However: "The presence of the representatives of this administration at the said conference does not involve recognition of it by the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam." The statement reiterates Hanoi's previous stand: The 4 points, the NLF as the only authentic representative of the South Vietnamese people, the US to withdraw all of its troops and those of its satellites, liquidate its military bases and let the South Vietnamese people settle their own affairs in accordance with the NLF political programme. The following day, the Fatherland Front issues a similar statement. *(Viet Nam and the Failure of the U.S. War of Destruction Against the D.R.V.N. (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1968), pp. 15-27.)*

3 November-- Ho Chi Minh issues an appeal to the nation. He declares: "We have defeated the war of destruction waged by the U.S. imperialists in the north. This, however, is only an initial victory. The U.S. imperialists are very obdurate and perfidious. They talk of 'peace' and 'negotiations', but they have not yet given up their aggressive designs. Over one million U.S.,

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puppet and satellite troops are still perpetrating, daily, innumerable savage crimes against our compatriots in the south...That is why, it is the sacred duty of our entire people now to increase our determination to fight and to win, and our resolve to liberate the south, defend the north, and proceed toward the peaceful reunification of the fatherland... Let our compatriots and fighters in heroic south Viet Nam, under the glorious banner of the national front for liberation, unremittingly carry on their offensive and uprisings and resolutely march forward and win complete victory." *(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 46, 11 November 1968, p. 17.)*

3 November-- The Central Committee of the National Liberation Front issues a statement on the political settlement of the Vietnam problem. It calls the unconditional cessation of bombing a "great victory". It realizes, however, that the US has not given up its aggressive aims—that Washington is still trying to cling to South Vietnam. The NLF declares its stand on the political settlement of the Vietnam problem:

"1. South Viet Nam is resolved to struggle for the materialization of its sacred rights, namely independence, democracy, peace, neutrality, prosperity, and ultimate peaceful reunification of the fatherland.

2. U.S. imperialism must put an end to its war of aggression against Viet Nam, withdraw all its troops and troops of its satellites and all war means from south Viet Nam, and liquidate all U.S. military bases in south Viet Nam.

3. The internal affairs of the south Vietnamese people must be settled by the south Vietnamese people themselves in accordance with the political programme of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation, without foreign interference. A broad national and democratic coalition government is to be formed; and free general elections in south Viet Nam are to be held.

4. The reunification of Viet Nam will be decided by the people in the two zones of Viet Nam, step-by-step, by peaceful means and on the basis of consultations and agreements between the two zones, without foreign interference.

5. South Viet Nam will pursue a foreign policy of peace and neutrality: no military alliance in any form with foreign countries, and establishment of friendly relations with all countries on the five principles of peaceful co-existence. Good neighbourhood relations will be set up with the Kingdom of Cambodia on the basis of respect for her independence, sovereignty, neutrality and territorial integrity with her

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present borders, and with Laos on the basis of respect for the 1962 Geneva agreements concerning that country."

Furthermore, the "South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation is building up and developing a revolutionary administration of the south Vietnamese people. The governments of many countries and the world's people have recognized the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation and given it great support and assistance. The South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation is the authentic representative of the legitimate aspirations of the south Vietnamese people and has full competence to settle all problems concerning south Viet Nam... The South Viet Nam National Front for National reiterates its complete unanimity of views with and full support for the four-point stand of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. This stand...constitutes the correct basis for the settlement of the Viet Nam issue." The Front supports the DRV's willingness to meet in a conference involving the four participants in the war. This does not, however, in any way constitute recognition of the Saigon regime. *(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 46, 11 November 1968, pp. 18-19.)*

4 November-- The Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces issues a statement declaring its "full approval" of the position of the NLF on the political settlement of the South Vietnamese problem and its decision to participate in the Paris talks. It notes: "The Front, whose presence is necessary, plays a decisive role in any political settlement of the South Vietnamese problem...The...Alliance...vigorously backs all its policies on the battlefield as well as at the conference table." *(Viet Nam and the Failure of the U.S. War of Destruction Against the D.R.V.N. (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1968), pp. 52-53.)*

5 November-- After three days of meetings, delegates* from the NLF and the Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces issue a joint communique generally embodying the content of their separate statements of 3 and 4 November. The two sides note the "very favourable" situation in the war, reaffirm the Front's 5 points of 3 November, and emphasize the need for "joint action with all forces, all individuals who, though not yet affiliated to them, share" the common goals of independence, sovereignty, etc.

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* Among the NLF delegates attending were the Front's President, Nguyen Huu Tho and its Secretary General, Huynh Tan Phat. The Alliance group included its President, Trinh Dinh Thao, its Vice-President, Lam Van Tet, and its Secretary General, Duong Ky.

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(Viet Nam and the Failure of the U.S. War of Destruction Against the D.R.V.N. (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1968), pp. 57-70.)

8 November-- RVN President Thieu proposes that the new phase of the Paris talks involve only two delegations: an Allied delegation headed by the Saigon regime and including the Americans, and a Communist delegation headed by the DRV and including members of the NLF. Hanoi's Xuan Thuy, however, rejects this proposal, stating that his Government could not accept the idea of a single Communist delegation. *(91st Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (5th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1969), p. 67.)*

23 November-- On ABC's "Issues and Answers", Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford says that he is "optimistic about the results" of the Paris negotiations and that the DRV wants peace because of the attrition suffered by its forces. He asserts that there has been 'meticulous compliance" with the requirement that Hanoi would not take advantage of the bombing halt to infiltrate men and supplies through the DMZ into the South. *(91st Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (5th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1969), p. 67.)*

25 November-- Agreements are signed providing for "free economic and military assistance from the Soviet Union to the D.R.V., the extension of more long-term credits, and trade between the two countries for 1969." *("Commentator", "When Will Realism Prevail?" International Affairs (Moscow), no. 1 (January 1969), p. 63.)*

26-27 November-- On 26 November, the State Department issues a statement which is "designed to answer the questions which have been raised by the Government of the Republic of Vietnam about new meetings in Paris." It reveals that "our side" at the negotiations "will be constituted as separate delegations of the Republic of Vietnam and the United States" and that "the United States has not agreed and will not agree that the meeting is, or can correctly be described as a four-sided or four-party conference." The statement repeats Washington's stand that the presence of the NLF at the conference in no way implies recognition of the Front as a separate entity and that "we will regard and treat all the persons on the other side of the table...as members of a single side, that of Hanoi, and for practical purposes as a single delegation." The statement also declares that the RVN would "take the lead and be the main spokesman on all matters which are of principal concern to South Vietnam." It repeats the previous American

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pledge not to impose a coalition government on Saigon. The following day, RVN Foreign Minister Tran Chanh Thanh announces that his Government will take part in the peace talks, since the United States, in the statement of the previous day, had satisfied "in their essential aspects" Saigon's earlier objections to participating. *(91st Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (5th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1969), p. 68.)*

4 December-- Ambassador Harriman comments that since the new phase of the Paris negotiations had not started, the understanding with Hanoi involving the cessation of bombing was technically not in force. He notes that the US hopes to make the restoration of the DMZ "one of the early matters" discussed when the delegates meet. He is "hopeful" that an agreement can be reached encompassing that part of the understanding dealing with Communist shelling of the "major cities" of South Vietnam. He also says that there will be "some time, a discussion of the withdrawal of foreign forces in accordance with the Manila Declaration." *(91st Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (5th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1969), p. 68.)*

11 December-- In the most optimistic assessment of pacification yet, the US Mission in Saigon reports that 73.3% of the South Vietnamese people are living in relatively secure areas. Contested areas are said to contain 13.3% of the populace, while the VC control 13.4%. *(91st Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (5th Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1969), p. 68.)*

16-18 December-- On 16 December, President Thieu lists 3 points to a peace settlement: 1. the Communists must "stop all activities under any form" against the Saigon Government; 2. the Communists "must deal directly" with the Saigon regime on any war settlement; 3. RVN will "never accept any Communist organizations" in its territory. Two days later, RVN Premier Tran Van Huong states his belief that the South Vietnamese army could defeat the VC without help from US forces if the North Vietnamese withdraw from the South. *(91st Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam, (5th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1969), p. 68.)*

21 December-- Chinese Defense Minister and Vice-Premier Lin Piao cables greetings to DRV Defense Minister Giap on the 24th anniversary of the founding of the (North) Vietnamese People's Army. He expresses his belief that "the Vietnamese people and

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their army, tempered through protracted revolutionary struggle, will see through the enemy schemes and intrigues. With the south and the north being of one mind, sharing hatred for the common enemy and persisting in protracted war, the heroic Vietnamese people will certainly be able to defeat the U.S. aggressors thoroughly and win final victory..." *(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 53 (30 December 1968), p. 5.)*

23 December-- Tran Buu Kiem, NLF delegate to the Paris talks, states that direct discussions between the Front and the "present Saigon administration" are impossible and that the problem in South Vietnam will have to be solved by the NLF and the United States. He mentions, however, that "we do not exclude anyone" from a "peace cabinet" in Saigon to replace the Thieu regime. *(91st Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (5th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1969), p. 69.)*

30 December-- Radio Hanoi broadcasts a complaint from the Pathet Lao to the ICC which accuses US planes of dropping four or five times as many bombs on Communist-ruled territory in eastern Laos as they did before the bombing of North Vietnam was halted on 1 November. *(New York Times, 31 December 1968, p. 6.)*

30-31 December-- First Ho Chi Minh on behalf of the DRV, then Prince Souphanouvong for the Neo Lao Hak Xat and Nguyen Huu Tho for the NLF send Peking their congratulations on China's successful new hydrogen bomb test, calling it a great encouragement to the Vietnamese and other revolutionary peoples. *(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 2 (13 January 1968), pp. 3-5.)*

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January-- The Soviet-oriented World Marxist Review contends that the "new phase that opened in November 1968 in the fight against the U.S. aggression in Vietnam presents good opportunities for a peaceful settlement, and augurs a relaxation of tensions in Indochina and throughout Southeast Asia." The journal remarks that the DRV/NLF leaders are well aware of the importance of working out a long-range political effort. In particular, it is noted, on the international level a "highly representative anti-imperialist front of democratic, peace-loving forces has emerged over the years as a counterweight to the aggressive imperialist policy." The United States is accused of stalling at the Paris talks and of stepping up its intervention through its "accelerated pacification program":

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"Details of this secret Pentagon plan were leaked to the press. Liberation Agency, the information office of the NLF, reported that the Pentagon intended to carry through the following strategic aims:

1. Continue with the 'clear and hold' strategy while defending and looking for ways of beating the enemy.

2. Retain the cities and towns, the communication lines and all important points at all costs; also to try to hold other areas.

3. Reorganize and rearm the Saigon army to prevent disintegration, make it battleworthy and able to face up to an enemy offensive. Secure favorable positions for the Saigon army and Saigon government.

4. Reduce the losses and participation of the U.S. army by 'de-Americanizing' the war, shifting the main burden gradually on the Saigon army.

Politically, the agency reported, three main tasks were set:

1. Reinforce the Saigon army.

2. Restrict North Vietnam aid to the South and isolate South Vietnam militarily and politically.

3. Consolidate the role of the Saigon government and administration...

However, again the results of the 'accelerated pacification' have not come up to expectations...

While engaging the enemy on all fronts, the patriotic organizations are strengthening the armed forces, going ahead with socio-economic reconstruction and building up democratic bodies of people's rule. Towards the end of last year, local councils and administrative committees were established in all the main rural areas where the overwhelming majority of the South Vietnam population lives." *(Ivan Shchedrov, "Vietnam: the New Phase", World Marxist Review, XII, no. 1 (January 1969), pp. 10, 13-14.)*

January-- The Soviet journal International Affairs complains that Washington "has continued its reconnaissance flights over North Viet Nam. In other words, the gross violations of D.R.V. sovereignty have been continued, constituting a clear act of war and contravening international law. On some days, there have been more than 20 such flights. Provocative shelling of the demilitarised zone was resumed almost at the same time,

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and this was followed by direct intrusions by American and Saigon troops...Finally, U.S. planes have repeatedly bombed and shot up some areas of the D.R.V. under the pretext of providing cover for operations to rescue U.S. airmen brought down over the D.R.V...But that is not all. Since November 1, there has been a marked increase in the intensity of the unannounced bombings of the liberated areas of Laos... Since November 1, the armed provocations of U.S., Saigon and Thai troops against neutral Cambodia have become even more dangerous and aggressive...The Pentagon has thus been extending and intensifying its military operations in every sector of the Indochinese war...In this situation, many observers anticipate hard going for the four-sided talks in Paris. Indeed, much of what the U.S.A. and its sponsored regime in Saigon have been doing leaves little ground for optimism, although the objective conditions and the real premises for the search for a peaceful settlement are unquestionably there." *("Commentator", "When Will Realism Prevail?" International Affairs (Moscow), no. 1 (January 1969), p. 62-63.)*

4-5 January-- On 4 January President-elect Richard Nixon announces that he has asked Ellsworth Bunker, Ambassador to Saigon, to remain in his post. The following day, the President-elect names Henry Cabot Lodge to be Chief Negotiator at the Paris talks after 20 January. He also names New York attorney Lawrence E. Walsh as Lodge's assistant. *(91st Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (5th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1969), p. 69.)*

10 January-- DOD reports US combat deaths for 1968 at 14,592 and noncombat deaths at 1,919. A South Vietnamese spokesman puts Communists killed at 191,307, with 21,050 captured and 17,597 defecting. RVN reports its own combat deaths at 17,486. *(91st Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (5th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1969), p. 69.)*

11 January-- A newly released US pacification report states that 76.3% of the South Vietnamese people live in "relatively secure" areas. The VC control 12.3% and 11.4% live in contested areas. *(91st Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (5th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1969), p. 69.)*

16 January-- The United States and North Vietnam announce agreement on the shape of the conference table and other procedural matters with the assent of the RVN and the NLF. The table

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will be round with two rectangular tables on either side of the main table, 18 inches away. Ambassador Harriman comments that in his opinion the agreement indicates that the Communists "desire negotiations." DRV spokesman Nguyen Thanh Le declares that the agreement shows that the conference "will have four participants with equal status." *(91st Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (5th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1969), p. 69.)*

22 January-- The Soviet journal New Times publishes an interview with Nguyen Thi Binh, who is Deputy Head of the NLF delegation to the Paris peace talks. Madame Binh asserts that military setbacks "forced the Americans...to 'limit' and then unconditionally halt the bombing of and all war acts against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and to agree to negotiations with the NLF, the true spokesman of the South Vietnamese people. This was a big victory for the Vietnamese people..." NLF good will was then immediately demonstrated by the rapid appointment of a representative to Paris to take part in preparatory work for the upcoming conference. The official Front delegation arrived in the French capital on 16 December to hasten the opening of the talks. Unfortunately, "various maneuvers" of the imperialists and the Saigon administration temporarily delayed the opening of the talks. Binh repeats the previously announced NLF political stand. *(New Times, no. 3, 22 January 1969, pp. 10-11.)*

25 January-- Ambassador Lodge, at the first substantive session of the Paris negotiations, proposes "as a practical first step on the road to peace" the restoration of the DMZ. He cites the flaws of present methods of international supervision of the Geneva Agreements and suggests that "the nations of the area should be involved in the system of monitoring of the agreement at which we may arrive." Lodge declares that "all external forces should be withdrawn from South Vietnam and that all military and subversive forces of North Vietnam must be withdrawn into North Vietnam." The United States is ready to work toward this objective and "the prompt release of prisoners held by both sides." Lodge adds that "we seek peace not only in Vietnam but in the entire area of Southeast Asia" and specifically cites Laos and Cambodia in this respect. RVN's Pham Dang Lam also calls for the withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops and the restoration of the DMZ. He states that his Government "is ready to hold talks with the Hanoi authorities on the subject of relations between the South and the North for economic, cultural and family matters." He claims that "the national community is prepared to welcome" back members of the NLF if they renounce the use of force and Communism as an ideology and if they "opt for political struggle" according to the South

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Vietnamese constitution. In reply, the DRV's Xuan Thuy and the NLF's Tran Buu Kiem both state that their delegations seek a "political solution" to the Vietnam problem. Thuy restates the DRV 4-point plan and Khiem reiterates the NLF's 5-point program of 3 November 1968, both of which call for the withdrawal of US troops and the settlement of South Vietnam's internal affairs "in accordance with the political program of the NLF without foreign interference." Thuy calls for the creation of a "peace-restoring cabinet" in Saigon. *(91st Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (5th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1969), p. 70.)*

28 January-- In a statement distributed by the Soviet news agency Tass, Foreign Minister A. A. Gromyko accuses the United States of having stepped up air raids, ground shelling and the use of "toxic substances" in areas held by the Pathet Lao. He charges that US aircraft "have recently been flying 200 daily missions or more on the average over Laotian territory." The Foreign Minister complains that the intensified American activities in Laos "by no means create a favorable atmosphere" for the Paris negotiations on Vietnam. The New York Times observes that according to reports emanating from Washington last November following the stopping of the bombing of North Vietnam, the United States intended to triple the level of bombing along the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos in order to compensate for the effects of the halt in the DRV. The Times also remarks that the "toxic substances" referred to may have been defoliants used to open up the jungle canopy covering enemy operations. This same day, State Department spokesman Robert J. McCloskey rejects the Soviet charges and contends that Gromyko "distorts the realities of the problem of Laos." *(New York Times, 29 January 1968, p. 8.)*

30 January-- The Soviet Government newspaper Izvestia cites a recently released memorandum of the Neo Lao Hak Xat Central Committee in charging that the "Americans have embarked on a path of direct military operations against the patriotic forces of Laos...American aircraft use bombs and shells..., as well as napalm, phosphorus and chemical bombs. In accordance with its criminal practice, the U.S. Air Force makes raids on communities... [N]umerous planes, including B-52 heavy bombers, that recently carried out marauding attacks on the Democratic Republic of Vietnam are now being used for the...raids on Laos." The newspaper repeats Foreign Minister Gromyko's warning that "the escalation of U.S. intervention in Laos...does not create a favorable atmosphere for the talks in Paris..." It demands: "The military interference of the U.S.A., first of all the criminal bombing of Laos, must be stopped. This would create safer conditions for the solution of the internal problems of

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Laos by the national forces themselves, without outside interference. This would normalize the political climate throughout the Indochinese Peninsula and would be conducive to a peaceful settlement in Vietnam." *(I. Loboda, "Threat to Laos", trans. DES, Izvestia, 30 January 1968, p. 2.)*

30 January-- Ambassador Lodge, at the second session of the substantive negotiations in Paris, says: "The key to solution is to arrange the mutual withdrawal of all external forces from South Vietnam, and that involves the withdrawal of North Vietnamese forces." He adds: "As that happens, the withdrawal of allied forces will commence." He repeats his proposal of the previous session that "a logical first step in the direction of peace is the restoration of the demilitarized zone" subject to "an effective system of international inspection and verification." The DRV's Xuan Thuy replies: "Only on a political basis can we settle military questions. Therefore, both the political and the military problems have to be solved" at the conference. However, Thuy makes no specific proposals. *(91st Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (5th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1969), pp. 70-71.)*

4 February-- The Soviet Communist Party organ Pravda complains about American negotiating techniques: "First, it has been noted that the American side has decided to have recourse to an old trick...This comes down to pulling certain special or secondary problems into the foreground, launching prolonged debate on these problems and accompanying all this by a propaganda campaign against the other side...[T]he American delegate placed special emphasis on the question of the demilitarized zone. It was not by chance that some observers assessed this as a deliberate attempt to obscure the forest by emphasizing the trees, i.e., to evade discussion of the essence of the problem...Second, the world press is now writing with great anxiety about newly increased activity in the American punitive operations in South Vietnam, about new aerial provocations against the D.R.V...The present quadripartite talks in Paris have opened up realistic prospects for a political settlement of the Vietnam problem. But, as has been repeatedly pointed out by the representatives of the D.R.V. and the N.L.F. of South Vietnam, this problem can be solved only on the basis of the cessation of American aggression in Vietnam, the withdrawal of the troops of the U.S.A. and its allies from South Vietnam and the granting to the population of South Vietnam of its inalienable right to settle its own affairs." *(Erik Alekseyev, "Two Positions", trans. DES, Pravda, 4 February 1968, p. 5.)*

5 February-- President Nixon declares during a news conference that the subject of troop withdrawals from South Vietnam is "high on

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the agenda of priorities, and that just as soon as either the training program for South Vietnamese forces and their capabilities, the progress of the Paris peace talks, or other developments make it feasible to do so, troops will be brought back." He believes that "at this time the separation of political and military problems at the Paris talks "is in our interests and in the interest of bringing progress in those talks." *(91st Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (5th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1969), p. 71.)*

6 February-- According to the US press spokesman William Jorden, the third substantive negotiating session at Paris produces "certainly no progress." Ambassador Lodge afterwards reveals that "the going is hard. Therefore, there must be no false optimism." At the meeting, Lodge denies attempting to separate military and political issues, holding that a political settlement "must be a matter for determination by the South Vietnamese themselves" and that "the separation of the contending military forces will help to create a climate in which the political process can go forward without external interference." He again proposes "the withdrawal of all North Vietnamese military and subversive forces to North Vietnam. As that is happening, the withdrawal of American and allied forces will commence." When asked what the Ambassador meant by "subversive forces", Jorden says that he was referring to North Vietnamese subversive forces. In response to all this, the DRV's Xuan Thuy declares that "the problem as a whole must be solved in both its political and military aspects, the political aspect being fundamental." He reiterates that Hanoi's 4 points and the NLF's 5 points are the "only basis" for moving "toward a just political solution of the Vietnam problem." The Front's Tran Buu Kiem states that "the Paris conference cannot progress as long as the Thieu-Ky-Huong administration remains" in power. Thuy holds that "the Saigon delegates prove more and more to be the obstacles" at the conference. At a news conference held this same day, RVN President Thieu declares that in spite of Communist intransigence in Paris, "the Government of Vietnam will never walk out of the conference." He announces: "In 1969, the army of the Republic of Vietnam has the capability to replace a sizable nunber of troops from American combat units." *(91st Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (5th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1969), p. 71.)*

Spring-- Viet-Nam: Documents and Research Notes, no. 61-62, which was issued by the US Mission in Saigon in June 1969, discusses two VC documents captured by US troops in Binh Duong and

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Dinh Tuong Provinces in March and May of this year. One of these documents (no. 61), dated 12 February, is a circular issued by the Current Affairs Committee, possibly the Committee for Sub-Region 1 of the COSVN. The other document (no. 62) is from the notebook of a member of an unidentified District Party Committee. Viet-Nam: Documents and Research Notes comments: "According to basic Viet Cong doctrine, the Revolution, whose culmination will be the promised General Offensive and General Uprising, has several characteristics. Among these are the leading role of the Party, and development of the struggle in irregular stages. In the words of the documents...'the general situation is evolving exactly in the way the Party predicted it would,' and 'The present is only a transitory phase, and we will advance forward to secure a decisive victory.'" The importance of these documents is described as follows:

"Both are based upon resolutions and directives of COSVN. Both reveal how that center of Viet Cong authority interprets, in the light of its doctrines, such developments as the cessation of bombing in the North, the Paris Conference, and the announced American readiness to withdraw troops - they are ingredients of a 'decisive victory' which will be complete when 'determination and efforts to intensify our military, political and troop proselyting attacks against the enemy' will compel him 'to accept defeat contrary to his intention.'

Both documents foreshadow offensives to be launched in the summer of 1969. Document No. 61 warns against pessimism induced by the 'failure to win decisive victory during this Spring campaign', and directs the creation of 'favorable conditions for our Summer Campaign...If at that time our force is still insufficient, it will be necessary for us to continue our efforts for another short period of time and we will have many possibilities to gain the decisive victory.'

Document No. 62 says: 'We should compare the 1968 phase with that of the 1969 spring in order to see the difference between all out attack and non-all out attack, and to see that it was not a question of a short time but rather a prolonged period.'

'The decisive victory should be won step-by-step, bit-by-bit', it adds; '...We attack in phase H while Nixon is at the end of his honeymoon period and is under the pressure of various factions. The situation will evolve in a decisive way...' and 'On this basis, we should conduct stronger attacks to force Nixon to take a decisive policy by the end of June.'

Document No. 61 is explicit in its insistence on flexibility. Cadre at different levels, it says, 'should be made to

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understand that the fundamental points of the Party's policy as mentioned in COSVN resolutions have remained unchanged and have been brightly illustrated by the practical developments of the situation...'

'While considering the situation, we should be flexible and avoid two erroneous inclinations. We should not adopt all principles too rigidly [and] neglect the evolution of the situation and the main, basic purposes of the Party, nor should we mix strategic policy with basic policy.'

The reference to factional pressures which the Nixon administration will face, the need not to confuse 'strategic policy and basic policy', and the hazard of relying on outside help recall the analyses of Truong Chinh, North Viet-Nam's leading ideologist, in his speech on Karl Marx and in his earlier writings.

The application of Truong Chinh's teachings may also be seen in statements in Document No. 61: '...our actual military and political forces on the battlefield will determine the attitude of the enemy at the conference table and the issue of the negotiations...But we must not absolutely depend on and expect too much from the Paris Conference, and nurse an illusion of peace.'" *(Viet-Nam: Documents and Research Notes, no. 61-62 (Saigon: US Mission, 1969), pp. 1-2.)*

13 February-- The fourth substantive meeting of the Paris negotiations is held. In the words of Ambassador Lodge, they produce "nothing really significant." He adds: "I don't expect much to come out of these public meetings." During the talks, Lodge brings up the issue of South Vietnam's international position after the war, declaring that "the foreign policy of the South Vietnamese people, today and in the future, is a matter for them and their elected representatives to determine." The DRV's Xuan Thuy asserts that Washington and Hanoi have "radically opposed positions" with reference to self-determination in South Vietnam. He rejects "entirely" the proposal for restoring the DMZ. *(91st Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (5th Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1969), pp. 71-72.)*

14 February-- The VC high command issues an order to its troops to "launch new simultaneous attacks" and "increase military pressure on all fronts" during the new year. *(91st Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (5th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1969), p. 72.)*

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14 February-- Chinese Defense Minister Lin Piao sends greetings to Tran Nam Trung, Head of the Military Commission of the NLF Central Committee, on the 8th anniversary of the unification of the South Vietnam (VC) People's Liberation Armed Forces, expressing the belief that "[w]e are deeply convinced that, under the leadership of their great leader President Ho Chi Minh and persevering in protracted people's war, the 31 million Vietnamese people will surely drive out all the U.S. aggressors from Vietnam..." No specific pledges of aid are offered, only the usual notation that the "700 million Chinese people provide a powerful backing for the Vietnamese people; the vast expanse of China's territory is their reliable rear area." Two points to be noted about Chinese statements on Vietnam since early 1968 are the repeated emphasis on the need for the Vietnamese comrades to employ "protracted struggle" (as opposed to the large-scale engagements of Tet) and the singular absence of references to the Paris peace talks. *(Peking Review, X, no. 8 (21 February 1968), p. 3.)*

15-17 February-- The VC's seven day truce to observe the Lunar New Year (Tet) begins on 7:00 a.m. of 15 February. At 6:00 p.m. of the next day, US and RVN troops begin a 24-hour truce which ends at 6:00 p.m. on 17 February. Allied forces resume full scale action. *(91st Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (5th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1969), p. 72.)*

21 February-1 March-- Premier Souvanna Phouma reveals in an interview that his Government is considering holding "conversations" with the Pathet Lao representative in Vientiane directed towards the return of the pro-Communist insurgents to the coalition government, ending the civil war and holding general elections. At the same time, the Prince also emphasizes the need to return to the 1962 Geneva Agreements and to bring about a withdrawal of the North Vietnamese troops in his country. He is notably cool with regard to proposals that his Government and the United States cease or reduce bombing of Communist-held territory. He states that if the "Vietnamese withdraw their troops, then we will stop the bombing." On 1 March, however, the Laotian Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Xat) rebuffs Souvanna's offer for direct talks to end the civil war. A Pathet Lao spokesman announces: "The Front cannot negotiate under pressure of U.S. bombs and shells. There will be no new contacts as long as the L.P.F. representation in Vientiane is still under encirclement by U.S.-fostered troops and police." *(New York Times, 22 February and 2 March 1969, pp. 7 and 8 respectively.)*

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23-24 February-- Communist forces launch a series of mortar and rocket attacks on about 115 targets in South Vietnam, including Saigon, Danang, Hue and the US base at Bien Hoa. On 24 February, RVN Vice-President Ky advocates that the South Vietnamese Air Force bomb North Vietnamese cities if the Communists continue to shell South Vietnamese cities and towns. *(91st Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (5th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1969), p. 72.)*

27 February-- At the sixth substantive session of the Paris talks, Ambassador Lodge tells the Communist negotiators: "The consequences of these attacks are your responsibility. They clearly raise a question as to your side's true desire to work toward a peaceful settlement of this conflict." He states that the understanding reached prior to the bombing halt "remains in force," but he makes no claims that the Communist attacks had violated the understanding. The DRV and NLF statesmen reply by accusing the Nixon Administration of intensifying the war. *(91st Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (5th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1969), p. 73.)*

March-- The Soviet-oriented World Marxist Review comments on the Paris peace talks. It notes: "The first substantive session of the Paris Conference coincided with the Nixon inauguration; this necessitated a change in the American team in Paris. Averell Harriman was replaced by Henry Cabot Lodge Jr...Cabot Lodge's record as U.S. Ambassador in Saigon opens up rather dim perspectives. He is one of the most outspoken anti-Communists in Washington...There are still more ominous signs. U. Alexis Johnson, newly appointed Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs and a former deputy ambassador in Saigon, declared on January 21, 1969 that he would not recommend to President Nixon any changes in the U.S. 'commitment' to South Vietnam. Asked if he would propose continuing 'exactly the same American policy,' he replied: 'I think our policy here is paying dividends and I think it is going in the right direction, yes'...Alexis Johnson's words should be coupled with what he had heard from Gen. Abrams and U.S. Ambassador to Saigon Ellsworth Bunker—as reported by the Washington Post on January 22. The essence of their report is summed up in the following paragraph: 'The South Vietnamese Army's build up, with belated re-equipping by the United States will be more or less complete by June 30, when a new U.S. look at its capabilities (and the tactical situation) will be in order'...Clearly it must be that the United States still entertains hopes of a military victory, and that until June 30 at least some people

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in Washington are not worrying about results in Paris." *(Zygmunt Broniarek, "The Paris Talks and Washington", World Marxist Review, XII, no. 3 (March 1969), p. 68.)*

4 March-- President Nixon states at a news conference that his Administration is reviewing the Communist offensive to determine whether this violation of the understanding with the DRV which led to the US bombing halt is "so significant that it requires action on our part." He declares that the offensive has failed to attain its objectives and says that the US "will not tolerate" continued assaults in violation of the agreement which "result in heavier casualties to our men." He asserts that the US "has a number of options that we could exercise to respond." *(91st Cong 1st Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (5th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations (Washington: GPO, 1969), p. 73.)*

6 March-- RVN's Pham Dang Lam cuts short the 7th negotiating session at Paris because "an atmosphere favorable to useful discussions does not exist." The Communists have proclaimed their intention to continue the offensive and denied the existence of any pre-bomb halt understanding between the United States and North Vietnam. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 73.)*

8 March-- US Military sources in Saigon disclose that Allied patrols are making secret probes into the southern sector of the DMZ and clashing on a daily basis with North Vietnamese regulars. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 73.)*

10 March-- In Saigon, Secretary of Defense Laird says that he does not foresee any increase in American troop strength in Vietnam but that "an appropriate response in either a military or diplomatic way" will be made if Communist shelling of Vietnamese cities continues. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 73.)*

12 March-- The RVN cabinet is reshuffled, eliminating supporters of Vice President Ky. This same day, the Defense Department issues an estimate that 100,000 North Vietnamese troops are in South Vietnam, 85,000 of them in North Vietnamese line

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units. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 73.)*

13 March-- At the 8th session of the Paris peace talks, the Communist side warns against US military retaliation to the shelling of the cities; allied delegates protest such attacks. Communist spokesmen reject the idea of secret talks and call on the Americans to deal directly with the NLF. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 73.)*

14 March-- At a news conference, President Nixon says that there is no prospect for the reduction of US troops in Vietnam in the foreseeable future because of the current enemy offensive. He states that the prospects for withdrawal hinge on 3 factors: the level of enemy activity, progress at the Paris peace talks, and the ability of the South Vietnamese to better defend themselves. He tells of his recent discussions with Secretary Laird and says that the US response to the Communist offensive will be discussed in the National Security Council. He does put off any drastic military retaliation for the offensive, citing the Paris talks and the drop in American combat deaths as factors making for restraint on the part of the US. He rejects criticism that American military pressure on the enemy may have provoked the offensive and declares that the US will deescalate if the Communists do the same. *(New York Times, 15 March 1969, p. 1.)*

20 March-- The 9th substantive negotiating session at Paris produces no apparent progress. A DRV spokesman denies that US and Hanoi diplomats have been conducting secret meetings in Vientiane, Laos. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 73.)*

21 March-- Peking Review publishes an anti-Soviet diatribe which charges Moscow with having become more active than ever since the June 1967 Glassboro talks in "working together with U.S. imperialism to bring about 'peace talks' on the Vietnam question." It accuses Premier Kosygin of having offered the Nixon Administration advice on how the US and the USSR could jointly "stabilize" the international situation. The Kremlin is said to be pressuring the Vietnamese people to lay down their arms and capitulate to US imperialism in South Vietnam. *("Soviet Revisionism Is U.S. Imperialism's No. 1 Accomplice", Peking Review, XII, no. 12 (21 March 1969), p. 26.)*

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22 March-- The DRV Foreign Ministry rejects as a "slander" the assertions of Premier Souvanna Phouma that North Vietnamese troops are operating in Laos. *(New York Times, 23 March 1969, p. 2.)*

23 March-- The New York Times reports that aggressive American patrolling by small units in South Vietnam has resulted in a greatly expanded number of contacts with the enemy and explains the continued high casualty rate. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 73.)*

25-27 March-- President Thieu declares: "We are ready to have private talks with the National Liberation Front if they like." Thieu rejects a coalition government including the NLF but says that the Front could participate in elections if it reconstituted itself as a non-Communist party. The following day, President Nixon says that progress in the Paris negotiations will come through private talks and that the Administration will not publicly disclose the content of these talks. On 27 March, at the 10th session of the Paris discussions, the NLF's Tran Buu Kiem denounces President Thieu's offer to hold private talks with the Front. Ambassador Lodge and Pham Dang Lam declare that the price of a peace settlement includes the withdrawal of all North Vietnamese "regular and subversive forces" from Laos and Cambodia as well as from South Vietnam. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 74.)*

26 March-- The Soviet periodical New Times comments on the 4-week old Spring offensive of the Viet Cong. It states: "The present offensive was launched by the liberation forces in reply to the barbarous air raids and punitive expeditions against the liberated areas. The New York Times recalls that after the halt of raids on North Vietnam on November 1 General Abrams was ordered to exert 'all-out pressure on the enemy' in South Vietnam. The United States, writes the paper, 'cannot demand the right to press the fighting with increased vigour itself while charging double-cross whenever the Communists do the same.'" The journal contends that Washington has apparently learned nothing from Defense Secretary Laird's recent visit to South Vietnam and even appears ready to escalate the conflict. *(Col. A. Leontyev, "The Fighting in South Vietnam", New Times, no. 12 (26 March 1969), p. 11.)*

29 March-- The DRV Foreign Ministry charges that warfare in Laos is "really being waged by the Americans" and that Laotian Government claims of the presence of North Vietnamese troops

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are merely intended to "conceal the extent of the war in Laos." The statement calls on the United States to "cease using Thailand as a base of aggression against Vietnam and Laos." It warns that the US would be "responsible for the consequences stemming from its acts" and asks that "the Laotian people be allowed to settle their own affairs" in line with the 1962 Geneva Accords. The Foreign Ministry also protests against "the intensification of American air attacks on Cambodian territory." *(New York Times, 30 March 1969), p. 2.)*

April-- Australian Communist journalist Wilfred Burchett, who has close contacts with the Vietnamese Communists, writes an article on the Paris talks for the Soviet periodical New Times. He claims that the "present U.S. policy differs in discernible way from the bankrupt Vietnam policies of President Johnson." He complains:

"The official line of 'off the record' briefings to Western journalists at the beginning of the Paris talks was that Hanoi had reacted to the Johnson March 31 speech in only three days because the D.R.V. was really on the 'point of collapse' and in the South, the NLF had taken such 'horrifying losses' during the Tet offensive, that they were also on the point of collapse. This was the reason why the D.R.V. had hurried to Paris to 'salvage what could still be salvaged.'

This was the pure Rostow line, ignoring all the realities of the military-political situation in the South and the unshakable resistance to the bombings in the North.

It was this 'line' that dominated a major part of the U.S. delegation. And although it is doubtful whether Averell Harriman and his aide Cyrus Vance ever fully accepted this, it was the 'line' that dominated the negotiating instructions they received from Washington.

It was a curious fact and reflection on Johnson's style of work that the Harriman-Vance delegation had no negotiating powers whatsoever. They acted as little better than gramophone records and letter boxes, repeating statements prepared in Washington and cabled to them for each meeting, and rejecting the statements made by Minister Xuan Thuy.

For almost six months the D.R.V. delegation proposed that the bombings be halted unconditionally so that full-scale negotiations might start. The American reply was to try and impose conditions, aimed at sealing off the South hermetically from the North as the price for halting the bombing completely.

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Meanwhile up to double and treble the monthly tonnage of dropped formerly over the whole of the D.R.V. was now concentrated in the area between the 17th and 19th Parellels—about one seventh of the territory of the D.R.V. Thus the intensity of tonnage on the area still being bombed was stepped up twentyfold, supplemented by the huge guns of the battleship 'New Jersey.'"

Furthermore, Burchett rejects the American contention that the bombing of the North had been halted in return for "understandings" that there would be no attacks against cities in the South and that the DMZ would be inviolable. Burchett says that "[t]here were, in fact, no such 'understandings' or 'tacit agreements,' the bombing halt was unconditional or in the precise wording agreed upon, it was 'without conditions.' For the D.R.V. this was a matter of principle...From a practical point of view, too, it was absolutely impossible that the D.R.V. would have given any undertakings which limited the military activities of the NLF on their own soil...The myth of the 'understandings' was exploded during the NLF's 1969 'spring offensive.' At the first session of the Paris Conference after the offensive started, Cabot Lodge twice referred to 'understandings that had been made clear to the other side...' Journalists at the press conference which followed pointed out that an 'understanding that has to be made clear to the other side' implies a 'unilateral understanding,' which in fact means no understanding at all. At the following meeting Lodge dropped charges of either 'violations' or of 'understandings.'" Burchett comments on the procedural dispute which had delayed the opening of substantive negotiations: "In fact an important point of principle was at issue. By insisting on a two-sided table, the U.S.-Saigon side wanted to pretend that the NLF had no independent existence. It was some sort of appendage of the D.R.V. It had no base in the South. This absurdity was necessary to bolster the U.S. pretext for aggression—namely that the war in the South was being conducted by the D.R.V. It could be halted by deporting the NLF resistance forces to the North. Any who refused deportation should lay down their arms and the war would be over. This was the content of the 'two-sided table' argument. The D.R.V.-NLF delegates were prepared to have a square table, a triangular table, a round table, any shaped table so long as the independent status of the NLF delegation was not questioned." Burchett further notes that "[d]uring the period from the total bombing halt, starting November 1, 1968, through to the first month of the quadripartite talks, it was universally recognized that the NLF had consciously shown great 'restraint' in its military activities. No major military actions were launched, while the NLF did everything possible to create a favourable atmosphere for the peace talks...But once

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again this 'restraint' was not only matched by the U.S.-Saigon side but was again interpreted as a sign of 'weakness.' Planes and warships formerly concentrated against the North were transferred south of the 17th Parallel where anti-aircraft defences were notably weaker. The use of the giant B-52 bombers...was greatly stepped up, especially in the densely populated villages surrounding Saigon and in the Mekong Delta. A programme of 'accelerated pacification' was instituted aimed at winning back for Saigon territory lost during the previous year's Tet offensive...A despicable 'Plan Phoenix' was also set in motion aimed at the physical liquidation by assassination of 80,000 Vietnamese patriots listed as NLF 'cadres,' including everyone from Central Committee members down to hamlet level...Floods of optimistic statements poured out of Saigon and Washington...[Moreover,] New York Times correspondent, Terence Smith, revealed in a dispatch from Saigon on March 23, that...[a] 'sharp increase in the frequency of American-initiated contacts was revealed by a study of confidential statistics compiled by the U.S. Command here...The pull-back of enemy troops from the cities and towns, particularly in the northern and central parts of South Vietnam in the late summer and early fall of last year permitted the allied troops to spread out and assume a more vigorous role...' It was just this perfidious conduct of the Pentagon 'hawks' that provided the background to the spectacular NLF 'spring offensive.'" Burchett ends by commenting on the US/Saigon negotiating positions at Paris: "Cabot Lodge and the others all know that the proposal to apply just that bit of the Geneva Agreements which suited U.S. aims to perpetuate the division of Vietnam and deport the resistance movement north of the 17th Parallel is absolutely inacceptable. But for the first three months of the quadripartite Paris talks, this has been Lodge's main proposal...The most recent and flagrant example was the much publicized offer of puppet president Nguyen Van Thieu to hold 'direct talks' with the NLF. Washington knows that the NLF aim is not to give the Thieu-Ky regime some prestige by negotiating with it...That this was not a serious proposal, only a trick to deceive public opinion, was clear from Thieu's accompanying remarks to the effect that the NLF must dissolve itself, and that there could be no question of a coalition government. And no question of U.S. troops leaving South Vietnam...One thing is clear: there can be no progress at the Paris talks until Washington recognizes the indisputable fact that a military victory is unattainable and that the Vietnam question can only be solved by peaceful means. And this implies first and foremost the withdrawal of foreign troops from Vietnamese soil." *(Wilfred Burchett, "The Paris Talks and the War in Vietnam", New Times, no. 16 (23 April 1969), pp. 16-19.)*

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April-- The Soviet-oriented World Marxist Review notes: "After the Paris talks opened, Washington announced that it would withdraw some 50,000 men from Vietnam this year. It stressed, however, almost in the same breath, that the 'war effort' in South Vietnam would not decrease, implying in effect, that all its talk is not about folding up, but about 'de-Americanizing.' As much as possible of the interventionist force is to be replaced with South Vietnamese units, which led to a recent decision to expand the Saigon army, now 750,000 men, and to equip it with sophisticated arms...Peace in Indochina depends on whether or not the United States accepts the just demands of the DVR and NLF spokesmen in Paris, to which end world opinion and democratic associations and organizations must act in concert." *("Imperialists Stoking Up Tension", World Marxist Review, XII, no. 4 (April 1969), p. 56.)*

3 April-- US military sources in Saigon say that Special Forces teams have made forays into Cambodia during the past year to scout Communist troop movements in that country. These operations have the tacit approval of the Cambodian Government. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 74.)*

6 April-- In an interview, North Vietnamese Defense Minister Vo Nguyen predicts total victory through another Dienbienphu rather than through the Paris negotiations. He states: "While the delegates talk, we fight. We want peace but not peace at any price, not a compromise peace." *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 75.)*

6-8 April-- On 6 April, RVN President Thieu outlines a 6-point peace plan in his State of the Nation address to the opening of the South Vietnamese National Assembly. He offers the enemy a policy of "national reconciliation" in which the NLF would enjoy full political rights in exchange for the withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops from South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. He holds out the possibility of "peaceful co-existence" with North Vietnam, including economic and cultural exchanges after a cease-fire is effectuated. Reunification can eventually be achieved through "the free choice of the entire population of Vietnam through democratic processes." He says, however, that there can be no serious peace talks as long as the enemy continues to escalate the war and demands a coalition government. Subsequently, an NLF spokesman at the Paris talks dismisses Thieu's proposals as "insolent and absurd" and

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"reactionary", while scoring the US. *(New York Times, 7 and 9 April 1969, pp. 20 and 5 respectively.)*

10 April-- At the 12th session of the Paris peace talks, the Communists deny that the talks have made any progress but do not specifically deny that secret talks are going on. Ambassador Lodge declares that: "A lasting settlement must also involve a willingness on the part of North Vietnam to respect the territorial integrity of its neighbors and to respect international frontiers and demarcation lines." This same day, Front delegate Tran Buu Kiem states in an interview that the NLF would back the formation of any peace government proposed by the various political groups in Saigon and that "the NLF is holding out no condition that it participate in such a government." *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 75.)*

12 April-- Viet-Nam: Documents and Research Notes, no. 64, summarizes a document captured on 1 June, which was issued in April by an unspecified command agency, probably the (VC) People's Liberation Army Headquarters. It notes that this document repeats

"...the assertions--that 'complete' victory will be achieved in a series of steps, and that developments have shown that the Party has been correct in its plans and estimates--which appear in an increasing number of Viet Cong documents captured during spring and summer of 1969.

The document...is in two parts: an assessment of the situation in South Viet-Nam, and notes on 'Principles and Characteristics of the General Offensive and General Uprising.'

The first part contains characteristic claims of military and political successes scored by the Viet Cong during the spring offensive, and of deterioration in the capability of the Government of Viet-Nam and the United States to continue the war.

It calls for 'more and bigger victories', and says, 'We are racing against time...so we must step up our offensive... during the coming summer.'

The document cautions at the same time that '...we should not consider summer as a decisive phase, but a phase with special significance in which the Americans will be obliged to adopt a policy which is consistent with our line.'

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In its discussion of the General Offensive and General Uprising, the document concedes that 'the enemy still has more than one million troops' and that this number cannot be annihilated or wiped out.

Nevertheless, 'Victory will come to us, not suddenly, but in a complicated and tortuous way.' The document notes: '...we have made an important step forward--the enemy was defeated in the North [suspension of bombing]; he has to talk with the Front (NLFSVN) in Paris and discuss the problems of troop reduction, withdrawal of troops and coalition government.' It sees these as steps toward certain American defeat.

'...whether the phase of General Offensive/Uprising will be prolonged or shortened, the victories gained will be great or small, the difficulties met will be many or few, will depend on the intensity of our efforts', the document says; 'Therefore we must dismiss the thought of relying on others' assistance, or the wait-and-see attitude.'

'For this reason,' the document concludes, 'the concept of securing the decisive victory in either the Winter-Spring or Summer Campaign is not relevant.'" *(Viet-Nam: Documents and Research Notes, no. 64 (Saigon: US Mission, 1969), pp. 1-2.)*

17 April-- At the 13th meeting of the Paris peace talks, the Communist side attacks proposals for a mutual troop withdrawal and cites differences in the American and South Vietnamese positions on this issue. Ambassador Lodge states that the United States is prepared for "withdrawal of American and allied forces simultaneously with those of North Vietnam." *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 76.)*

18 April-- At a news conference, President Nixon says that he feels that prospects for peace have "significantly improved" since he took office, largely because of what he terms greater political stability in Saigon and the improvement of the South Vietnamese armed forces. He says that favorable developments clearly go beyond the Paris talks, though he offers no hint that peace is near. The President dismisses suggestions that he might order a one-sided reduction in the American war effort. He says that he will not order a reduction in American offensives in order to cut casualties; neither is he considering unilateral troop withdrawals. He reiterates the 3 factors set forth in his 14 March news conference as constituting the criteria to be considered in making further reductions in US force levels. He notes that the enemy offensive is currently in a lull. *(New York Times, 19 April 1969, p. 1.)*

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24 April-- At the 14th session of the Paris peace talks, held on 24 April, the Allies continue to press for a mutual troop withdrawal. The Communists continue to demand an "unconditional" withdrawal of American forces from South Vietnam. On 30 April, at the 15th session of the negotiations, the NLF's Tran Buu Kiem hints that the Front might be ready to hold private talks with South Vietnam. He adds that the Front's position has not changed and that the conference must accept its political program as "the base" for a "correct political solution." RVN spokesman Nguyen Thieu Dan says that "I don't think that it's anything new." The DRV's Xuan Thuy also rejects expanding the scope of the negotiations to include Laos and Cambodia. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 76.)*

30 April-- According to US figures released on this date, at the end of March 1969 the VC controlled 2,608 hamlets, the Government controlled 7,212, and 1,572 were contested. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 76.)*

5 May-- In Hue, more than 800 South Vietnamese bodies have been found in makeshift graves. It is believed that about 2,000 persons were murdered by the Vietcong in their month long occupation of this city in the 1968 Tet offensive. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 77.)*

8-9 May-- At the Paris peace talks on 8 May, NLF delegate Tran Buu Kiem reads a new 10-point proposal, the substance of which is as follows:

"...On the basis of the political program and the five-point position of the South Vietnam National Liberation Front, which keeps with the four-point stand of the governament of the Democratic Republic of North Vietnam,

The South Vietnam National Liberation Front sets forth the principles and main content of an over-all solution to the South Vietnam problem to help restore peace in Vietnam as follows:

1. To respect the Vietnamese people's fundamental national rights, i.e. independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity, as recognized by the 1954 Geneva agreements on Vietnam.

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2. The United States Government must withdraw from South Vietnam all United States troops, military personnel, arms and war materiel of the other foreign countries of the United States camp without posing any condition whatsoever; liquidate all United States military bases in South Vietnam; renounce all encroachments on the sovereignty, territory and security of South Vietnam and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

3. The Vietnamese people's right to fight for the defense of their fatherland is the sacred, inalienable right to self-defense of all peoples. The question of the Vietnamese armed forces in South Vietnam shall be resolved by the Vietnamese parties among themselves.

4. The people of South Vietnam shall settle themselves their own affairs without foreign interference. They shall decide themselves the political regime of South Vietnam through free and democratic general elections; a constituent assembly will be set up, a constitution worked out and a coalition government of South Vietnam installed, reflecting national concord and the broad union of all social strata.

5. During the period intervening between the restoration of peace and the holding of general elections, neither party shall impose its political regime on the people of South Vietnam.

The political forces representing the various social strata and political tendencies in South Vietnam that stand for peace, independence and neutrality—including those persons who, for political reasons, have to live abroad—will enter into talks to set up a provisional coalition government based on the principle of equality, democracy and mutual respect with a view to achieving a peaceful, independent, democratic and neutral South Vietnam.

The provisional coalition government is to have the following tasks:

A. To implement the agreement to be concluded on the withdrawal of the troops of the United States and the other foreign countries of the American camp.

B. To achieve national concord, and a broad union of all social strata, political forces, nationalities, religious communities and all persons, no matter what their political beliefs and their past may be, provided they stand for peace, independence and neutrality.

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C. To achieve broad democratic freedoms—freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, freedom of belief, freedom to form political parties and organizations, freedom to demonstrate, etc.; to set free those persons jailed on political grounds; to prohibit all acts of terror, reprisal and discrimination against people having collaborated with either side, and who are now in the country or abroad, as provided for by the 1954 Geneva agreements on Vietnam.

D. To heal the war wounds, restore and develop the economy, to restore the normal life of the people and to improve the living conditions of the laboring people.

E. To hold free and democratic general elections in the whole of South Vietnam with a view to achieving the South Vietnam people's right to self-determination, in accordance with the content of point 4 mentioned above.

6. South Vietnam will carry out a foreign policy of peace and neutrality:

To carry out a policy of good neighborly relations with the Kingdom of Cambodia on the basis of respect for her independence, sovereignty, neutrality and territorial integrity within her present borders; to carry out a policy of good neighborly relations with the Kingdom of Laos on the basis of respect for the 1962 Geneva agreements on Laos.

To establish diplomatic, economic and cultural relations with all countries, irrespective of political and social regime, including the United States, in accordance with the five principles of peaceful coexistence: mutual respect for independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, nonaggression and noninterference in internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, peaceful coexistence, to accept economic and technical aid with no political conditions attached from any country.

7. The reunification of Vietnam will be achieved step by step, by peaceful means, through discussions and agreement between the two zones, without foreign interference.

Pending the peaceful reunification of Vietnam, the two zones shall re-establish normal relations in all fields on the basis of mutual respect.

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The military demarcation line between the two zones at the 17th parallel, as provided for by the 1954 Geneva agreements, is only of a provisional character and does not constitute in any way a political or territorial boundary. The two zones shall reach agreement on the status of the demilitarized zone, and work out modalities for movements across the provisional military demarcation line.

8. As provided for in the 1954 Geneva agreements on Vietnam, the two zones, North and South Vietnam, shall undertake to refrain from joining any military alliance with foreign countries, not allow any foreign country to maintain military bases, troops and military personnel on their respective soil, and not recognize the protection of any country or military alliance or bloc.

9. To resolve the aftermath of the war:

A. The parties will negotiate the release of soldiers captured in war.

B. The United States government must bear full responsibility for the losses and devastations it has caused to the Vietnamese people in both zones.

10. The parties shall reach agreement on an international supervision about the withdrawal from South Vietnam of the troops, military personnel, arms and war material of the United States and the other foreign countries of the American camp.

The principles and content of the over-all solution expounded above form an integrated whole. On the basis of these principles and content, the parties shall reach understanding to the effect of concluding agreements on the above-mentioned questions with a view to ending the war in South Vietnam, and contributing to restore peace in Vietnam."

Commenting on the NLF proposal the following day, Secretary of State William Rodgers says that it contains some clearly unacceptable points but that it might also have elements worth exploration. *(New York Times, 9 and 10 May 1969, pp. 6 and 1 respectively.)*

9 May-- The Cambodian Government and the NLF agree to raise their diplomatic relations to the embassy level. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 77.)*

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9 May-- The New York Times reports that US B-52 bombers in recent weeks have raided VC and North Vietnamese supply dumps and base camps in Cambodia for the first time. These attacks had the tacit consent of Cambodian authorities, who have increasingly been cooperating with American and South Vietnamese military forces at border areas, often giving them information about Communist movements into South Vietnam. The Times reports that "knowledgeable sources" say that three principal factors underlie the new air strikes: 1. an increased concern by the US military that most of the rockets and other heavy weaponry used by the Communists in South Vietnam now come by sea to Cambodia and never have to run any sort of bombing gauntlet before reaching their destiny; 2. a desire by the Nixon Administration to signal Hanoi that, while still pressing for peace in Paris, it is willing to take some military risks avoided by the previous Administration; and 3. an apparently increasing concern by Prince Sihanouk that the North Vietnamese and VC now effectively control several of Cambodia's northern provinces, with the Cambodian Government lacking sufficient power to dislodge them. The Times also reports that the enemy, in order to reduce losses in the B-52 raids, has dug in and dispersed supply caches in such a way that it is unlikely that all supplies in any one area will be hit by the linear pattern of bombs dropped by a B-52. Each plane, normally carrying about 30 tons of bombs, lays out a pattern that is 1,000 feet wide and 4 miles long. Over the past two weeks, according to one estimate, more than 5,000 tons of bombs have been dropped in the Cambodia-South Vietnam border area. *(New York Times, 9 May 1969, pp. 1 and 7.)*

11 May et seq.-- North Vietnamese and VC troops strike throughout South Vietnam with the largest number of attacks since the 1968 Tet Offensive. On 12-13 May alone, Communist forces launch more than 200 attacks against military and civilian targets. In Saigon, ten terrorist incidents are reported. The intensity and severity of these assaults, however, are far below the levels of Tet. Commenting on the new offensive, the 4 June issue of the Soviet journal New Times states: "The liberation forces have been repeatedly shelling almost all the big towns in South Vietnam, causing heavy damage to military installations. As a year ago, the U.S. Command was compelled to suspend its 'pacification' operations in the countryside to concentrate on the defence of the cities...Fierce fighting is raging almost throughout South Vietnam. It is especially bitter north, northwest and south of Saigon, on the border with Laos and Cambodia in the central highlands, around

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Da Nang, and southwest of Hue. Under cover of rocket and mortar fire, Liberation Army units attack American and Saigon positions, inflicting heavy losses in manpower and materiel...All the more significant under the circumstances is the new peace initiative the South Vietnam National Liberation Front has taken by advancing a ten-point programme for the cessation of hostilities. It has thus once again displayed good will and proved its sincere desire for peace. The NLF plan has won world-wide support...Washington, however, shows no serious intention of working for a peaceful agreement. It refuses even to consider the unconditional withdrawal of its troops from South Vietnam. An yet this is essential to peaceful settlement." The New York Times on 13 May reports that some Paris sources believe that the new enemy attacks are designed to demonstrate that the 8 May NLF proposals are not a sign of military exhaustion on the part of the Communists. In any case, the VC and the North Vietnamese clearly do not believe that the revival of offensive operations will change the US attitude towards American troop withdrawals. *(Col. A. Leontyev, "Liberation Forces Step Up Attacks", New Times, no. 22 (4 June 1969), pp. 12-13; New York Times, 13 May 1969, p. 5.)*

13 May-- The NLF's Tran Buu Kiem accuses the United States of intensifying the war and calls on the US to negotiate directly with the Front. He demands a provisional "peace" cabinet in Saigon to prepare the way for elections in South Vietnam. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 77.)*

14-16 May-- On 14 May, President Nixon delivers a nationally televised speech on Vietnam and predicts possible unilateral American troop withdrawals. The President outlines an eight-point plan for peace, based on the freedom of the South Vietnamese to determine their own political future and requirements for withdrawal from South Vietnam "of all non-South Vietnamese forces." Specifically, his eight points are:

"—As soon as agreement can be reached, all non-South Vietnamese forces would begin withdrawals from South Vietnam.

—Over a period of 12 months, by agreed-upon stages, the major portions of all U.S., Allied and other non-South Vietnamese forces would be withdrawn. At the end of this 12-month period, the remaining U.S., Allied and other non-South Vietnamese forces would move into designated base areas and would not engage in combat operations.

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—The remaining U.S. and Allied forces would move to complete their withdrawals as the remaining North Vietnam forces were withdrawn and returned to North Vietnam.

—An international supervisory body, acceptable to both sides, would be created for the purpose of verifying withdrawals, and for any other purposes agreed upon between the two sides.

—This international body would begin operating in accordance with an agreed timetable, and would participate in arranging supervised ceasefires.

—As soon as possible after the international body was functioning, elections would be held under agreed procedures and under the supervision of the international body.

—Arrangements would be made for the earliest possible release of prisoners of war on both sides.

—All parties would agree to observe the Geneva Accords of 1954 regarding Vietnam and Cambodia, and the Laos Accords of 1962."

Nixon emphasizes that the United States is flexible and insists "on no rigid diplomatic formula" provided "there were adequate assurances that it would be observed." He claims that the US does not seek to retain bases in Vietnam, nor to accomplish "a purely military solution." He praises President Thieu's proposals for peace and states that the just-proposed eight-point plan is made with the approval of the South Vietnamese Government. Initial Communist reaction to President Nixon's proposal is negative. The following day, the NLF says in a broadcast that "we will further accelerate the armed and political struggles..." Moreover, at the 17th session of the Paris peace talks, held on 16 May, Xuan Thuy describes the eight point proposal as a collection of "apparently alluring words" that is really designed "to elude the key question" of unconditional American troop withdrawal. Tran Buu Kiem says that the US plan is evidence that the "Nixon Administration does not seek peace." *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), pp. 78, 300.)*

15 May-- An official "Observer" article in the Soviet Government newspaper Izvestia endorses the NLF "10 points for peace" presented at the Paris talks on 8 May. It describes US/RVN

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reaction to this proposal as being frightened and confused and claims that the American press "rushed to announce that the 10 new points 'offer nothing new.'" Moscow calls talk of an impending withdrawal of some American troops from South Vietnam "a new propaganda lure...calculated to reduce criticism of the Washington administration's Vietnam policy and to influence the Saigon clique to take on more of the burden of military operations." Plans for "Vietnamization" of the war have nothing to do with the desire for peace: "The U.S.A. simply wants to carry on the war by means of someone else's hands..." *("Observer", "The Way to Settlement in Vietnam—Important Proposals of the National Liberation Front for South Vietnam", trans. DES, Izvestia, 15 May 1969, p. 2.)*

17 May-- In an interview, DRV Premier Pham Van Dong says: "The day the United States decides to withdraw its forces, all other problems will be solved and the Paris deadlock will be broken. It is this decision we demand and it is the key to all other issues." *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 78.)*

20 May-- On the eleventh attempt, American and South Vietnamese forces capture Apbia Mountain or "Hamburger Hill", a 3,000-foot mountain overlooking the Ashau Valley close to the Laotian border. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 79.)*

24-26 May-- On 24 May, Xuan Thuy, DRV delegate to the Paris peace talks, states that: "Between the ten points of the National Liberation Front and the eight points of President Nixon, there are points of agreement that could be the object of discussion," despite "fundamental differences" between the proposals, particularly on the issue of mutual troop withdrawal. In an interview conducted two days later, NLF delegate Tran Buu Kiem predicts that at some point a cease-fire will be agreed upon in Paris; but in order for this to come about, the United States will have to halt military operations. Kiem specifically bars President Thieu, Vice President Ky, and Premier Huong from a future coalition government. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 79.)*

28 May-- US officials report that North Vietnamese infiltration into the South has been between 8-10,000 per month, except

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for March when the figure was doubled. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 80.)*

30 May-- Peking Review denounces comments made by President Nixon at a recent meeting of the National Association of Broadcasters to the effect that the United States should maintain "its position of strength," that it should possess "immense retaliatory power," and that it would have to deal with the "potential of a Chinese threat." The Chinese declare: "Nixon also uses crafty counter-revolutionary dual tactics towards socialist China. On the one hand, he talks profusely about 'peaceful coexistence' and uses the trick of sham relaxation. On the other hand, he persists in continuing to occupy Taiwan, which is China's territory, continually carrying out military provocations against our country, and intensifying efforts in rigging up a ring of military encirclement around China. To replace the now impotent 'Southeast Asia Treaty Organization,' the Nixon government is stepping up its plot to form a new military alliance with Japan as the 'backbone' and the United States as the 'buttress.' While preparing to unleash a new war of aggression against China, U.S. imperialism is using its running dogs in Asia as hatchetmen in an attempt to stamp out the revolutionary flames on this continent." After denouncing US-Soviet collusion against China, the article quotes Defense Minister Lin Piao's political report to the Communist Party's Ninth National Congress: "In short, we must be prepared. Chairman Mao said long ago: We will not attack unless we are attacked; if we are attacked, we will certainly counter-attack." The article concludes by quoting Mao: "All reactionaries are paper tigers. In appearance, the reactionaries are terrifying, but in reality they are not so powerful." It states: "U.S. imperialism is a paper tiger, and so is Soviet revisionism." *(Kuo Hsiang-hung, "Nixon's Rabid Activities in Arms Expansion and War Preparations", Peking Review, XII, no. 22 (30 May 1969), pp. 18-19.)*

31 May-- The US Command claims that 84.2 percent of the South Vietnamese lived in "relatively secure" areas during May, a rise of 0.9 percent since April. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 80.)*

June-- The Soviet journal International Affairs evaluates the prospects for the American policy of "Vietnamization". It concludes that "the Saigon regime has a large, well-armed force at its disposal. However, even together with more than half a million

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American troops it is neither in a position to defeat the National Liberation Front forces nor to 'control' the country's territory. First and foremost, this is because the South Vietnamese political regime, which is fully dependent on the U.S. imperialists, does not enjoy popular support, and because the morale and combat efficiency of the Saigon armed forces, which are compelled to fight for interests that are alien to the South Vietnamese people, are at a very low level. The percentage of deserters is very high and corruption and profiteering are rife, particularly among the officers...This is why the American generals have had to revise their plans for the 'Vietnamisation' of the war. Until recently it was planned to start withdrawing American troops on July 1, 1969. But after Defence Secretary Melvin R. Laird's visit to Vietnam it was announced that no definite date could as yet be set." *(V. Gidaspov, "Saigon Armed Forces", International Affairs, no. 6 (June 1969), p. 128.)*

3 June-- A Washington Post article reports that the South Vietnamese armed forces now have 1,045,500 men. This figure will be increased by nearly 100,000 by the end of 1969. The regular forces total 430,000 men, or double the 1965 figure; territorial or militia troops total 391,000, also twice the 1965 figure; paramilitary forces total 182,000. The air force has 18,000 men and the navy 21,000. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 80.)*

5 June-- Secretary Rogers declares at a news conference that the United States is "not wedded to any government in Saigon" but that "any government that represents the will of the people of South Vietnam is acceptable to the United States." He says that the details of elections are subjects for negotiation, and calls on the Communists to release the names of American prisoners of war and permit visits by neutral observers. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 80.)*

5 June-- US planes bomb anti-aircraft batteries in North Vietnam which shot down an unarmed American reconnaissance plane. This is the first reported bombing in North Vietnam since November. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 80.)*

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8-9 June-- On 8 June, Presidents Nixon and Thieu, meeting at Midway Island, announce that the United States will withdraw 25,000 combat troops from Vietnam in July and August. The President asserts that "further replacements" of American troops will depend on three criteria: progress in the training of South Vietnamese forces, progress in the Paris peace talks, and the level of enemy activity. In their joint communique, the two Presidents "agreed that application of the principle of self-determination required that the people be able to choose without interference or terror. They rejected Communist attempts to pre-determine the outcome of future elections before they are held." They favor adequate supervision and guarantees of any government, and urge a timetable for future mutual withdrawals of American and enemy forces. The following day, the NLF delegation in Paris declares that the American decision to withdraw 25,000 troops from Vietnam represents "only a grain of sand thrown in an ocean and in no way affects the continuation and intensification of the war." *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 81.)*

10 June-- The international conference of representatives of Communist and Worker's Parties, meeting in Moscow, issues an appeal in support of the 10-point program of the NLF (see 8-9 May entry). This declaration states: "The heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people against U.S. aggression is a key component of the worldwide battle between socialism and imperialism, between the forces of progress and those of reaction...By undertaking armed intervention in Vietnam the imperialist forces of the USA made an attempt to destroy one of the outposts of socialism in Asia, bar the road of the peoples of Indochina to peace, freedom and progress, strike a blow at the revolutionary national liberation movement in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and test the solidarity of the socialist countries and all anti-imperialist forces...These plans of U.S. imperialism are doomed to failure...With massive support from socialist countries, primarily from the Soviet Union, as well as from all peace-loving peoples in the world, the Vietnamese people have demonstrated to the USA, the most powerful force of imperialism, that its might is not limitless...The successful struggle of Vietnam mirrors the changes in the international balance of power and the growing might of the forces of socialism, democracy and national liberation on a global scale...The struggle of the Vietnamese patriots shows that a people which consistently fights imperialism for freedom and independence and has on its side the Soviet Union and all

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other socialist countries and the peace-loving forces of the whole world is invincible...The U.S. intervention in Vietnam is a permanent threat to world peace and a direct challenge to all peoples fighting for peace, national independence, democracy and social progress. True to the principles of proletarian internationalism and in the spirit of fraternal solidarity, the international communist and working-class movement will continue to render the Vietnamese people all the assistance they require until the final triumph of their just cause." The conference therefore issues the following demands and appeals:

"—the United States must renounce its obstructionist stand at the quadilateral conference in Paris;

—the United States must forthwith cease its acts of aggression in Vietnam and completely and unconditionally withdraw its troops and those of its satellites from South Vietnam;

—the United States must recognize the right of the population of South Vietnam to decide their internal affairs by themselves without foreign interference;

—the United States must end all actions directed against the sovereignty and security of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam;

—the United States must cease its interference and aggression in Laos and its violations of the territorial integrity of Cambodia, recognize her frontiers, abandon its aggressive aims with regard to the states of Southeast and East Asia and strictly abide by the 1954 and 1962 Geneva Agreements.

We demand that Thailand, New Zealand and Australia, the South Korean puppet regime and also the Federal Republic of Germany and Japan end their open or veiled participation in the U.S. aggression in Vietnam!

On behalf of the many millions of Communists we appeal to all men of good will who cherish peace, justice and the freedom and independence of nations:

—to protest with greater determination throughout the world against the criminal war waged by U.S. imperialism in Vietnam!

—to take a still more active part in the international movement of solidarity with the heroic Vietnamese people!

—to demand the withdrawal of U.S. and satellite troops from Vietnam!

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—to demand the prompt peaceful settlement of the Vietnam problem on the basis of ensuring the inalienable rights of the Vietnamese people!

—to support the 10 points of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam!

We call for the immediate initiation of further, still more powerful, varied and coordinated action by the anti-imperialist, peace loving forces in support of the struggle of the Vietnamese people against U.S. aggression!" *("Independence, Freedom and Peace for Vietnam", World Marxist Review, XII, no. 7 (July 1969), pp. 27-29.)*

10 June-- Secretary of Defense Laird states that the Defense Department will spend about $36 million in the remainder of fiscal 1969 and about $120 million in fiscal year 1970 to improve the fighting effectiveness of the ARVN and to procure equipment. This same day, Secretary of State Rodgers says that the planned withdrawal of 25,000 American troops "provides an opportunity for the North Vietnamese, if they are interested in de-escalating this war, to respond by withdrawing their forces to North Vietnam" but terms it "discouraging" from the enemy's standpoint, since it shows that the ARVN is becoming stronger. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 81.)*

10 June-- An eight-member American study team in South Vietnam from 29 May to 5 June says that the Saigon Government uses torture and brutality to suppress opposition and that present conditions will prevent South Vietnam from developing a strong, democratically elected government. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia And Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 81.)*

10 June-- On this date, Radio Liberation, the clandestine voice of the Viet Cong, announces the formation of a "Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet-Nam" (PRG). Viet-Nam: Documents and Research Notes, no. 60, comments on several broadcasts monitored this day:

"(1) Liberation Radio reported a meeting of delegations from the Central Committees of the NLF (National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam) and of the Viet-Nam Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces held on 23 May. This consultative conference 'decided to convene a Congress of National Delegates including very broad sections of representatives of revolutionary parties, patriotic organizations,

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religious communities, nationalities, various strata of local people, notables, intellectuals, and so forth...'

(2) The same source announced the establishment of a 'Republic of South Viet-Nam Regime' by the Congress of National Delegates which met on 6,7 and 8 June. This broadcast...consisted of the 'Basic Resolution of the Congress of National Delegates of South Viet-Nam', containing broadly the same policies and objectives promulgated in the earlier programs of the NLF and the Alliance, and purporting to speak in the name of the same all-encompassing groups of the population of South Viet-Nam from which the NLF and the Alliance claimed to derive their charters.

The resolution asserts that the PRG represents the 'will and aspirations of all the South Vietnamese people', and that it has the duty 'to mobilize and lead all people and armed forces' and to 'lead the People's Revolutionary Committees of all echelons.' It also provides for the creation of an Advisory Council 'to help [the PRG] reflect the entire people's aspirations in its works...'

In none of these or subsequent broadcasts dealing with these events was there any mention of where either the 23 May consultative conference of the NLF and Alliance delegates, or the 6-8 June Congress, were held. Neither was there any mention of steps taken between 23 May and 6 June to include 'very broad' representation of sections of the population not already committed to the NLF or the Alliance.

In two further broadcasts monitored that day, the composition of the shadow-government consisting of a Chairman, three Vice-Chairmen, nine ministries and nine vice-ministries...and the composition of the thirteen member Advisory Council [chaired by Nguyen Huu Tho]...were announced.

The interlocking nature of the membership of the Advisory Council and the leadership of the NLF and Alliance is evident from the affiliations of the Council members reported in the broadcast. A similar interlocking of the shadow-cabinet of the PRG with organs of the NLF and Alliance is shown in the following roster which lists concurrently-held positions for nineteen PRG incumbents."

Name	Position in PRG	Other Offices
Architect Huynh Tan Phat	Chairman	Vice Chairman of the NLF Presidium, and General Secretary of the NLF Central Committee

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Name	Position in PRG	Other Offices
Dr. Phung Van Cung	Vice Chairman	Vice Chairman of the NLFSV Central Committee Presidium
Prof. Nguyen Van Kiet	Vice Chairman	Permanent Member of the Alliance Central Committee
Tran Buu Kiem	Minister to the Chairman's Office	Chief NLF Delegate to Paris Conference
Tran Nam Trung	Minister of Defense	Chairman, Military Affairs Committee, NLF Central Committee
Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh	Minister of Foreign Affairs	NLF Delegate to Paris Conference
Dr. Phung Van Cung	Minister of the Interior	Vice Chairman of the NLFSV Central Committee Presidium
Engineer Cao Van Bon	Minister of Economy and Finance	Member of the Saigon Alliance
Composer Luu Huu Phuoc	Minister of Information and Culture	Director of the NLF Propaganda-Cultural-Training Section. Author of the GVN national anthem
Prof. Nguyen Van Kiet	Minister of Education and Youth	Permanent Member of the Alliance Central Committee
Ung Ngoc Ky	Vice Minister to the Chairman's Office	Member of the Secretariat of NLF Central Committee
Dong Van Cong and Nguyen Chanh	Vice Ministers of Defense	NVA Brig. Generals
Le Quang Chan and Hoang Bich Son	Vice Ministers of Foreign Affairs	Senior Member of NLF Delegation to UAR. Senior Member of NLF Delegation to Cuba

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Name	Position in PRG	Other Offices
Prof. Nguyen Ngoc Thuong	Vice Minister of Interior	Chairman of the Asian African Solidarity Committee (NLF Affiliate)
Writer Hoang Trong Qui --Pen Name Thanh Nghi--	Vice Minister of Information and Culture	Deputy Sec. Gen. of the Alliance of Nat. Dem. and Peace Forces
Ho Huu Nhut	Vice Minister of Education and Youth	Sec. Gen. Saigon Chapter of Alliance
Prof. Le Van Tha	Vice Minister of Justice	Member of NLF Central Committee

(Viet-Nam: Documents and Research Notes, no. 60 (Saigon: US Mission, 1969), pp. 1-2a.)

11 June-- The VC Radio Liberation announces that the Provisional Revolutionary Government has assumed authority for the NLF delegation in Paris. "In order to normally continue business at the Paris Conference on Viet-Nam and stimulate its progress" Mme. Nguyen Thi Binh, newly designated "Minister of Foreign Affairs," is to become head of the delegation, and Tran Buu Kiem, former head of the delegation, is recalled "for new assignments." Later this same day, the same radio broadcasts the "Action Program of the Provisional Revolutionary Government." Like the action programs of the NLF and the Alliance before it, it calls for the "defeat of the U.S. imperialists' aggressive war" and toppling the "whole puppet administration", and it adheres to the NLF's Ten Points as a basis for ending the war. Like them also, it aims at being all things to all men, holding out the expectation of economic and social gains, and the promise of leniency for "those who have committed crimes but are now repentant." The 12 points of the action program are as follows:

"1 -- To lead all people and armed forces who are united and of the same mind; to intensify military and political struggle to defeat the U.S. imperialists' aggressive war, to frustrate their scheme of Vietnamizing the war and to demand that the United States seriously talk with the Provisional Revolutionary Government at the Paris Conference on Viet-Nam on the basis of the Tem-Point Overall Solution of the NLF; to force the U.S. Administration to unconditionally withdraw all U.S. troops and the troops of the countries of the U.S. camp from South Viet-Nam in order to quickly end the

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war, to reestablish peace and to achieve the Vietnamese people's fundamental national rights -- that is, independence, national sovereignty, unification, and territorial integrity which are recognized by the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Viet-Nam.

2 -- To eradicate the camouflaged neocolonialist regime set up by the U.S. imperialists in South Viet-Nam; to topple the whole puppet administration organization; to abolish the constitution and all anti-people and anti-democratic laws of the puppet administration which encroach on the lives, properties, prestiges and other interests of the people; to build a truly democratic and free republican regime; to organize elections in accordance with the principles of equality, freedom and democracy and without intervention of foreign countries.

3 -- With a broad national concord spirit and for the sake of the supreme interests of the nation and people, the Provisional Revolutionary Government is ready to consult with the political forces representing the various people's strata and political tendencies in South Viet-Nam, including people who, for political reasons, have to live abroad, which sympathize with peace, independence, and neutrality, for the formation of a provisional coalition government based on the principle of equality, democracy and mutual respect. The provisional coalition government will organize general elections to elect a national assembly, to build a democratic constitution fully reflecting the interests and aspirations of all people, and to form a coalition government reflecting national concord and the broad unity of people of all walks of life.

4 -- Strengthen the people's resistance force in all respects, to consolidate and develop revolutionary administrations at all echelons, to build and consolidate revolutionary armed forces, unify patriotic armed forces, and consolidate and broaden liberated areas.

5 -- Realize broad democratic freedoms, release all persons detained by the U.S. imperialists and the puppet administration because of their patriotic activities, prohibit every terrorist and revenging act and any discriminatory treatment of those who have collaborated with this side or the other side, living at home or abroad; realize the equality of sexes in every respect; implement a policy of solidarity and equality among nationalities; ethnic minorities have the right to use their own spoken and written languages to develop their national culture and art and to maintain or to change their customs and habits. Respect freedom of faith and freedom of

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worship; practice equality among religious communities. Protect interests of Vietnamese residents abroad and just interests of foreigners living in South Viet-Nam.

6 -- Pay great attention to the interests of urbanities of all strata, especially the right to a decent life and democratic rights; improve the living conditions of workers and laborers; revise the labor law and set up a system of minimum wages; oppose mistreatment, fines, and dismissal of workers and laborers. Workers are entitled to participate in managing enterprises and are free to join trade unions. Oppose the forcible recruitment of youths and students into the puppet army. Guarantee studies of youths and students; personalities, intellectuals, professors, writers and artists, and journalists are entitled to freedom of thought, freedom of speech, and freedom of press. Industrialists and businessmen are entitled to freedom of business. Oppose oppression by foreign capitalists monopolists. Urbanites of all strata are entitled to participate in political activities and in all struggles for peace, independence, sovereignty, and the right to live. Oppose all repressive and terrorist U.S.-puppet activities.

7 -- Accelerate production to provide supplies for the frontline and improve the people's strength, creating conditions for advancing toward the building of an independent and self-supporting economy. Take care of the laboring people's lives. Give due consideration to the interests of other strata. Implement an agrarian policy in consonance with the practical circumstances in South Viet-Nam. Improve the peasants' living standards, restore and develop agricultural and industrial production, and encourage bourgeois industrialists and businessmen to contribute to developing industry, small industries, and handicrafts. Guarantee the right to ownership of production means and other property of citizens according to state law.

8 -- Eliminate the U.S.-type enslaving and depraved culture and education now adversely affecting our people's fine, long-standing cultural traditions. Build a national democratic culture and develop science and technology; improve the people's cultural standards, eradicate illiteracy, promote complementary education, and open more general education schools. Develop medical, hygienic, and prophylactic activities.

9 -- Encourage, welcome, and appropriately commend and reward puppet officers and enlisted men, police agents, and civil servants who render services and return to the people; in particular, encourage and commend and reward puppet army

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or police units who return to the Provisional Revolutionary Government. Those who have committed crimes but are now repentant and sincerely return to the people will be pardoned and enjoy equal treatment. They will be rewarded accordingly for their meritorious deeds.

10 -- Positively solve the problems left by the aggressive U.S. war and the puppet administration regime, heal the war wounds and stablize the people's normal life, wholeheartedly care for and help wounded soldiers and families of war heroes, and provide the people with jobs, positively solving unemployment. Concerning the compatriots who were herded by the enemy into concentration camps or strategic hamlets, those who want to stay there will be entitled to the right of mastership of land and ricefields and will be assisted in carrying on business activities on the spot; and those who want to return to their native places will be also aided. Give relief to the victimized compatriots and care for young orphans, debilitated and lame oldsters. The wounded and crippled puppet troops and policemen and the poor and helpless families of killed-in-action puppet troops and policemen will also be taken care of. Help those who were driven by the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys into debauchery to rebuild their life.

11 -- Re-establish normal relations between the South and North, guarantee the freedom of movement, correspondence, and residence, establish economic and cultural relations in accordance with the principle "both zones have interests, help each other, agree on the demilitarized zone statute, and prescribe procedures for crossing the temporary military demarcation line." The unification of the country will be achieved step by step through peaceful methods and on the basis of discussions and agreement between both zones, without coercion by either side.

12 -- Struggle for the sympathy, support, and aid of various countries and progressives worldwide, including the American people, for the South Vietnamese people's anti-U.S. national salvation undertaking. Positively support the national independence movements of the Asian, African, and Latin American peoples opposing imperialism and old and neocolonialism. Positively coordinate with the American people's struggle against the U.S. imperialists' aggressive war in Vietnam. Positively support the U.S. Negroes' just struggle for fundamental national rights. Implement a peaceful, neutral foreign policy. Establish friendly relations and a good-neighbor policy toward the Cambodian Kingdom on the basis of respect for the independence, sovereignty, and neutrality of Cambodia. Recognize

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and pledge to respect the territorial integrity of the Cambodian Kingdom according to the present borders. Implement a good-neighbor policy toward the Laotian Kingdom on the basis of respect for the 1962 Geneva Agreements on Laos. Establish diplomatic, economic, and cultural relations with all countries, the United States included, regardless of their political and social systems, on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence, respect for each other's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity, without infringement upon each other, without interference in each other's internal affairs, equality, mutual benefits, and peaceful coexistence. Accept aid in capital, technique, and experts from any country without political conditions attached. Join no military alliance, accept no military bases, troops, or military personnel of foreign countries on South Viet-Nam territory. Accept no foreign protection or military alliance." *(Viet-Nam: Documents and Research Notes, no. 60 (Saigon: US Mission, 1969), pp. 12-16.)*

11 June-- Prince Sihanouk announces that diplomatic relations between his country and the United States will be established at the level of charges d'affaires. Sihanouk also claims at a press conference that "our Vietnamese socialist friends [the Vietcong] are communizing our people and overtly Vietnamizing our territory..." He states that Cambodia will "fight with our own means to maintain our territorial integrity." *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information on Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 82.)*

12 June-- The Neo Lao Hak Xat—the political arm of the Pathet Lao—announces a "program of action" to form a new coalition government in Laos that would not take part in any "aggressive military bloc" and would not allow any foreign military bases on Laotian soil. The new coalition government would establish diplomatic relations with all countries "regardless of their political system." The program does not specifically mention the United States in calling for the withdrawal of "all advisers, military personnel, weapons and war means from Laos." Another section of the program, however, says that "the war in Laos is caused by the intervention and aggression of the U.S. imperialists." It repeats charges that Souvanna Phouma is a traitor to his people. *(New York Times, 13 June 1969, p. 10.)*

12-16 June-- On 12 June, the international conference of Communist and Workers' Parties, convening in Moscow, sends a telegram to the newly-formed Provisional Revolutionary Government warmly

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welcoming its establishment. It states that the "75 Parties represented at the Conference regard this event as a new and important stage of the heroic struggle for liberation waged by the Vietnamese people. They assure the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam and the entire Vietnamese people of their invariable support for their struggle for final victory." Four days later, the conference issues an "appeal in defense of peace", which contains a plank demanding "an end to U.S. aggression in Vietnam, the withdrawal of U.S. troops, respect for the sovereign rights of the Vietnamese people and independence, freedom and peace for Vietnam..." *(World Marxist Review, XII, no. 7 (July 1969), pp. 30-32.)*

13 June-- Premier Souvanna Phouma declares in an interview that the US bombing raids on Communist-held areas of Laos will continue as long as North Vietnamese troops use bases and infiltration routes in Laos. The New York Times comments that several nations have during the past six years tacitly violated various provisions of the 1962 Geneva Agreements. About 40,000 North Vietnamese are said to be on Laotian soil. US planes bomb all over Laos, especially along the Ho Chi Minh trail in an effort to harass the Pathet Lao and stop the flow of supplies to South Vietnam. Thailand has allowed the US to use her bases to make raids on Laos and is said to have several thousand Thai troops in that country in Laotian uniforms. One hundred American military attachés are reliably said to be in Laos acting as informal military advisors to the Laotian army, and perhaps twice that number of CIA employees—often recruited from special forces units leaving Vietnam—perform similar functions. *(New York Times, 14 June 1969), p. 3.)*

13-14 June-- The Soviet Communist Party newspaper Pravda states that the creation of the new Provisional Revolutionary Government "opens new prospects for the rapid and peaceful settlement of the Vietnam problem." The Soviets go on to note: "The new program adopted by the N.L.F., the active offensive operations of the patriots along a wide front, the gradual formation of democratic agencies of people's rule in all the liberated districts and the participation of the official delegation of the N.L.F. in the Paris negotiations-all these were steps in the selfless struggle and the victories that served as a prologue to the proclaiming of the Republic of South Vietnam. An important factor in the successful struggle of the Vietnamese people has been the determined and effective aid rendered by the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, and the international movement of solidarity with Vietnam." The following day, the Government newspaper Izvestia announces that Premier Kosygin had on 13 June informed the NLF permanent legation in Moscow that the Soviets would recognize the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic

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of South Vietnam. Izvestia declares that the "proclaiming of the Republic of South Vietnam and the formation of its Provisional Revolutionary Government mark a new and important stage in the struggle of the Vietnamese people for freedom, independence and peace...Already it has been recognized by the Soviet Union, the G.D.R., Bulgaria, Poland, the Mongolian People's Republic, Rumania, Yugoslavia, the K.P.D.R., Algeria, Cuba, Syria and other countries...The establishment of the Provisional Revolutionary Government has been characterized by many French, British and American bourgeois newspapers as a major diplomatic success for the South Vietnamese partriots. The Paris newspaper Combat remarked that the President of the U.S.A. and his brain trust had hoped to take the diplomatic, if not the military, initiative from their opponents by organizing the demonstration meeting with Thieu on Midway. The newspaper stressed that the newly formed Provisional Revolutionary Government in South Vietnam illustrated the failure of this policy." *(Ivan Shchedrov, "Important Stage", trans. DES, Pravda, 13 June 1969, p. 5; A. Ter-Grigoryan, "Major Success of Patriots of the South—Peace for Vietnam!", trans. DES, Izvestia, 14 June 1969, p. 4.)*

14 June-- Chou En-lai sends "warm congratulations" to Huynk Tan Phat on the founding of the Provisional Revolutionary Government. He notes that the "Chinese Government has always regarded the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation as the genuine legal representative of the south Vietnamese people, and the Permanent Mission of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation in China has long enjoyed the status of a diplomatic mission." Chou notes that the "recent talks held between the U.S. imperialists and the south Vietnamese puppet clique on Midway Island once again prove that they will never carry out unconditionally the withdrawal of all the U.S. aggressor troops and the vassal troops from southern Viet Nam, nor will they ever agree to the establishment of a revolutionary coalition government which truly accords with the wishes of the south Vietnamese people." Thus, he stresses, the armed struggle must be resolutely continued until complete victory is achieved. Only in this way can the South be liberated and reunified with the North. As usual, it is stated that the "Chinese Government and people 'firmly support' the Vietnamese people in their struggle. The Chinese Government hereby declares that it formally recognizes the Permanent Mission of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation in China as the Embassy of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam in China." *(Peking Review, XII, no. 25 (20 June 1969), pp. 5-6.)*

18 June-- The Soviet journal New Times publishes an interview with Pham Van Dong, which was granted on 2 June at the Presidential

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Palace in Hanoi. Dong states that the NLF 10 points are a "realistic constructive basis for solving the Vietnam problem." He declares that "precisely now, at this time, our Vietnamese people must step up the fight on all fronts —military, political, diplomatic and international. Action on all these fronts must be effectively co-ordinated. Our past experience shows that such co-ordination of action is highly necessary." He rejects President Nixon's 8-point programme for Vietnam: "Apparently, he made it to allay American public anger at the continuance of the Vietnam war. The anti-war movement in the United States is gathering momentum. Involved in it are broad sections of the public, the youth, some prominent politicians, Senators and Congressmen, part of the press, and even individual groups of servicemen. Thus the U.S. President is faced with the alternative: either he stops this criminal war, or it becomes 'his' war. And so just now he is uttering fine words of peace. He probably hopes to gain time to take up in the Vietnam question a 'strong position' for the execution of his designs. But these are futile hopes. Nothing will come of them...The American government evidently has not yet learned the lessons of the events in Vietnam. It is not prepared yet to help towards genuine peace here. And in these conditions we must step up our struggle on all fronts. The struggle of the Vietnamese people and the support for it from world opinion, including peace-loving opinion within the U.S., will force the American President to recognize that the aggressive Vietnam policy is a mistake. What must be done is to end the aggression, withdraw the American troops from South Vietnam, respect the Vietnamese people's independence and freedom...Time is working against Nixon. He cannot disregard that." *(New Times, no. 24 (18 June 1969), pp. 8-9.)*

19 June-- President Nixon states at a news conference that "there is no substantial evidence, publicly, to report" with regard to substantive negotiations at Paris but that "we hope within the next two or three months to see some progress in substantive discussions." He says: "I would hope that we could beat Mr. Clifford's timetable for troop withdrawals."* He proposes that the enemy "withdraw one-tenth of its forces, as we have withdrawn one-tenth of our combat forces, to reduce the level of fighting." President Nixon describes the NLF provisional revolutionary government as "simply a new name" for the National Liberation Front. The President endorses the concept of ceasefire as long as it is guaranteed and supervised by "an international force or some outs de force." *(91st Cong 2nd Sess,*

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*Former Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford, in the just-released July issue of Foreign Affairs, had proposed the withdrawal of all American ground combat forces from Vietnam by the end of 1970.

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Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 82.)

21-28 June-- On 21 June, Norodom Sihanouk says that the Vietcong have signed a paper admitting that their troops have violated Cambodia's territory, especially in Svayrieng Province. One week later, American military sources in Saigon announce that heavy fighting has taken place between North Vietnamese troops and Cambodian army units trying to drive the Communists from sanctuaries in Cambodia. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 83.)*

22 June and 6 August-- On these dates, Hanoi broadcasts two speeches of Vo Nguyen Giap. Viet-Nam: Documents and Research Notes summarizes:

"In June and July 1969, General Vo Nguyen Giap, Minister of Defense of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam (DRVN) and Commander in Chief of Viet-Nam's People's Army (VPA), delivered two speeches. In both--the first delivered to a congress of antiaircraft and air forces, and the second, before the cadre of the Third Military Sector--Giap stresses the need for an all-out preparation for continued political and armed conflict. Emphasizing the requirements to attain the Party's objective of victory over the 'imperialist aggressors,' Giap outlines measures which need the people's immediate attention. While making clear the primacy of ideology and absolute support of the people for the Party's 'revolutionary war line,' he also reiterates a much-repeated 'military line' calling for the use of a 'minimal force' to oppose a 'maximal force'--a small force equipped with older weapons to defeat an enemy having a larger force equipped with modern weapons.

He points out the need for 'crack forces' which can apply 'clever tactics' in bringing into full play all available 'crude, semi-modern and modern' weapons. Giap calls attention to the 'Party's stand' to raise the fighting quality and combat efficiency of the armed forces. For example, he wants the cadre most of all to have 'revolutionary ethics,' high tactical and technical standards and, as leaders, to be able to command skillfully.

Turning to the performance of the antiaircraft and air forces, he extols their 'glorious performance' but also indicates explicitly the need for improving antiaircraft artillery, missile and radar forces and for the consolidation of agencies in the logistic bases. Giap refers to the North as a revolutionary base for the whole

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country, and a great 'rear' for the South which he calls a 'great frontline.'

In his July speech Giap cites four continuing problems which obstruct the orderly development of 'socialist construction' and the speedy rebuilding of the local forces. These are: (1) the need of the people to fight against the enemy's air and naval war of destruction; (2) the need to meet the manpower requirements of the mobilization of the armed forces and of rapid expansion and development of local armed forces; (3) the need to prepare, during wartime conditions, for the building of socialist economy; and (4) the need to improve the leadership of the local party chapters.

Though Giap sees the bombing halt, the Paris talks and the de-Americanization of the war as evidence that the 'U.S. imperialists will certainly be even more disastrously defeated,' he insists that 'the local military task is an important part of our Party's military task as a whole.' It is, he says, 'closely associated with the just nature of ...national salvation wars.' The nature of the regional military task is to 'directly rely on local political and economic bases to develop the all-sided forces of the people and organize on-the-spot forces for fighting in these localities to annihilate the enemy, protect the people's lives and property, protect...local administration, and safeguard the local people's mastership right.'

Giap's call for a small force to attack a large force and his insistence on using rudimentary weapons against sophisticated ones is consistent with the prevailing situation; and, his exhortation to attack the enemy everywhere and at any time after the previous campaigns have failed to attain their announced goals can be understood as military support for the Paris talks. It is clear, however, that the Party line remains, as Giap puts it, the complete defeat of 'the U.S. aggressors in order to liberate the South, protect the North, and advance toward reunifying the fatherland.'" *(Viet-Nam: Documents and Research Notes, no. 68 (Saigon: US Mission, 1969), pp. i-ii.)*

23 June-- Le Duc Tho, member of the Lao Dong Politburo and Hanoi's supervisor of the DRV delegation at Paris, says in an interview that the Communists would reject a political settlement based on elections supervised either by a mixed commission of Communists and non-Communists or by an international supervisory body because "such supervision would constitute interference in the internal affairs of the South Vietnamese people..." He denies that "many secret meetings" have taken place and says that "no progress at all has been made in the

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meetings." *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 83.)*

28 June-- Preliminary US figures show that about 10,000 Communists a month entered South Vietnam from the North during the first five months of 1969 as against just under 17,000 a month in 1968. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 83.)*

28 June-- Military sources in Vientiane, Laos, report that North Vietnamese froces have captured Muong Soui, giving the Communists complete control of the strategic Plain of Jars in northern Laos. Premier Souvanna Phouma says the attack on Muong Soui amounted to an "invasion" from North Vietnam. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 83.)*

29 June-- The New China news agency denounces President Nixon's "withdrawal" plan as a "swindle". While the American President has announced the withdrawal of 25,000 US troops before the end of August, Peking notes, these units are to be replaced by ARVN forces, which are to be expanded and reequipped and are to receive stepped-up training. *(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 28, 14 July 1969, p. 24.)*

4 July-- The New China news agency accuses the Nixon Administration of "frantically stepping up arms expansion and war preparations at home...[and] intensifying its military activities for aggression in Asia, with the spearhead directed at socialist China... In the past few months since it came to office, the Nixon Administration has stepped up its collusion with the Soviet revisionist renegade clique and lined up the reactionaries of various Asian countries for a military ring of encirclement against China. At the same time, it has been busily engaged in military activities and military deployment in Asia. In the middle of March, it staged a show of force in the vicinity of Seoul by holding what is called so far the longest distance air-lift exercise. Recently, it once again mustered some of its SEATO lackeys to hold a large-scale naval manoeuvre off the Asian coast. It was reported that U.S. imperialism is at present planning to reorganize and expand its military set-up in Okinawa and to strengthen the latter's role as a military base. U.S. imperialism has indicated that it is going to increase its military 'aid' to the south Korean puppet regime. It has turned Thailand into a big military base during its war

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of aggression in Viet Nam this process has intensified since Nixon took office. The Associated Press revealed that an additional sum of at least 1,000 million dollars will be allocated by the Nixon Administration to step up the construction of strategic highways, airfields and other military installations in Thailand. All this shows that Nixon, like his predecessors, doggedly persists in the policy of aggression against Asia and that he is bent on hanging on to Asia and obstinately antagonizing the enemy of the Chinese people as well as the people of other Asian countries." *(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 28, 14 July 1969, p. 14.)*

11-17 July-- President Thieu challenges the Communists to compete in internationally-supervised elections under the administration of a mixed elections commission, to allow the people of South Vietnam to choose their future government. Thieu promises that all groups can participate and suggests six principles to govern the elections. This same day, President Nixon hails Thieu's offer as an eminently fair proposal and appeals to Hanoi to "let the political issues be resolved by the political process." However, the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam dismisses President Thieu's new peace proposal as a "swindle and a farce." The following day, RVN Foreign Minister Tran Chanh Thanh announces that the National Liberation Front can participate in the elections proposed by Thieu as the NLF, not "as Communists." On 17 July, the Communist delegations formally reject the RVN's new peace proposals at the 26th session of the Paris peace talks. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 84.)*

15 July-- In a statement broadcast over Hanoi's Vietnam News Agency, a spokesman for the Neo Lao Hak Xat says that the tripartite coalition government created by the 1962 Geneva Agreements had ceased to exist and that the International Control Commission "should stop all of its activities at once." The New York Times notes that the Geneva Accords provided that the ICC would have an initial life of three years and that both Hanoi and Peking have failed to ratify a 1965 British-Soviet proposal that its life be extended. Although the Commission has remained in Vientiane, the Chinese and North Vietnamese have refused to pay their share of the annual assessments, and the ICC has been unable to function or inspect alleged violations. The Times notes that the toughened stand of the Pathet Lao seems to be related to the continued heavy bombing of Communist-held areas which, the new statement demands, must be stopped "first and foremost." *(New York Times, 16 July 1969, p. 6.)*

20 July-- In an appeal issued on the 15th anniversary of the signing of the Geneva Agreements, Ho Chi Minh states that "the Vietnamese

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people firmly demand the withdrawal of all U.S. and satellite troops, not the withdrawal of only 25,000, or 250,000, or 500,000 men, but a total, complete, unconditional withdrawal...so long as U.S. troops and the puppet administration remain in existence in south Viet Nam, really free and democratic general elections will be absolutely impossible." *(Peking Review, XII, no. 41 (10 October 1969), p. 27.)*

20 July-- On the 15th anniversary of the signing of the Geneva Accords, the Provisional Revolutionary Government issues a communique stating that "the U.S. imperialists have not yet given up their aggressive design. The Nixon Administration, labouring under the illusion of a position of strength, is doing its best to step up the war, perpetrating new crimes in south Viet Nam. It is trying to prolong its military occupation of south Viet Nam, bolster the puppet administration and beef up the puppet army in an attempt to continue the domination of south Viet Nam by means of neo-colonialism and prolong the partition of Viet Nam. At the same time, the United States continues to violate the sovereignty and security of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam...Nixon's announcement on pulling 25,000 U.S. troops out of south Viet Nam is but a deceitful move...If the United States stubbornly prolongs the war of aggression in south Viet Nam, the people here will fight on persistently, till not a single U.S. aggressor soldier is left." *(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 30 (28 July 1969), p. 13.)*

24 July-- At the 27th plenary session of the Paris peace talks, the DRV's Xuan Thuy charges that the United States has invaded Laos with 12,000 troops and has started a separate war against that kingdom. "We demand that the United States cease its aggression, withdraw its troops from Laos and cease the bombing of that country." Thuy also accuses the US of sending troops into Cambodia. In response, Henry Cabot Lodge rejects the Communist charges as groundless, citing the presence of "large numbers" of North Vietnamese troops in Laos and Cambodia. He does not, however, state that there are no American forces in Laos, only that "the United States withdrew all its military personnel from Laos in 1962 and hoped that all parties would live up to the agreements" that were concluded that year in Geneva. These charges and countercharges come at a session in which neither side concedes anything towards substantive negotiation on a settlement of the war. There is some indication, however, that Saigon and the VC Provisional Revolutionary Government are privately exchanging views on possible elections in South Vietnam. Last week, the PRG Foreign Minister Nguyen Thi Binh had attacked President Thieu's proposals on elections because, she claimed, they would restrict activity by members of the NLF. Pham Dang Lam, head of the RVN delegation at Paris, on this day promises

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that "all candidates" in the proposed elections would enjoy equal opportunities and "no discrimination or reprisals will be exercized against the candidates." Lam also informed Mme. Binh that his Government is "prepared to welcome any suggestions which your side could put forward" on the arrangements for elections. Although Mme. Binh makes no direct response, one passage in her prepared statement apparently answers a charge made by Lam the previous week that supporters of the Saigon Government would be repressed by the provisional coalition government that the rebels seek to establish. Mme. Binh states that in the period between the restoration of peace and the holding of elections "neither party shall impose its political regime on the people of South Vietnam." Also at the 27th session, Hanoi's delegates widen their attacks on the US to include the issue of Okinawa, which is called a base for American aggression against North Vietnam, where "nerve gas has been stored for use in Vietnam and to intimidate the Japanese people." The DRV, it is stated, supports Japan's "fight" against US occupation of the island and demands that the Americans leave Okinawa, which "is an integral part of Japan." *(New York Times, 25 July 1969, pp. 1 and 6.)*

25 July-- Speaking at an informal news conference on Guam, President Nixon declares that a long-range post-war Asian policy for the United States should involve a continued American role there. He says that such a role would be based on keeping treaty commitments but avoiding the encouragement of dependence by Asian nations. He urges collective security to deal with future threats in Asia, with the United States avoiding creeping military involvement while supplying economic assistance. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), pp. 84-85.)*

29 July-- US military commanders in Vietnam are reported to have modified their battlefield strategy of "maximum pressure" in recent weeks to a strategy of limited response to enemy actions, "protective reaction" designed to keep American casualties down. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 85.)*

August-- The Soviet-oriented World Marxist Review declares: "The Vietnamese people's fight and victories are of the utmost importance to the development of the world situation and the great fight for freedom and independence, against imperialism. That is why the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties proclaimed all-round support for the Vietnamese a priority aim of united action by Communists and all other anti-imperialists. It is no exaggeration to say that resolute support

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of Vietnam has become a vital problem for the liberation movement in every part of the globe, whatever its character, be it working-class or national liberation. Final victory for the Vietnamese patriots, and a forced U.S. pullout of all interventionist and aggressive troops from Vietnamese territory is of fundamental importance in consolidating the positions of all peoples, without exception, in their fight against imperialist violence and lawlessness." in an obvious reference to Peking, the journal claims that the successes of the Vietnamese people "expose the political insolvency of those who have tried to spread doubt about the effectiveness of Soviet assistance, and slander the Soviet people and their splendid Party, the party of Lenin, by twisting the facts about the war in Vietnam and presenting a distorted picture of the situation. And in casting doubt on the strength of the Vietnamese people, who rely on Soviet assistance, they had a very definite purpose: to plunge mankind into a devastating world nuclear war to achieve their selfish, great-power aims. These men alleged that Soviet material and political support of, and international solidarity with, the Vietnamese people were inadequate, ineffective and useless. However, the Vietnamese people and their Working People's Party, guided by the wise and experienced leader, Comrade Ho Chi Minh, debunked this and showed the whole world what a small but heroic and fully determined people can do in standing up for its independence and sacred soil." *(Khaled Bagdash, "Vietnam's Just Cause Will Triumph", World Marxist Review, XII, no. 8 (August 1969), p. 17.)*

4 August-- President Nixon briefs Congressional leaders on his trip to the Pacific, telling them that the US intends to keep but not expand its commitments in Asia. He stressed the need for Asian countries to bear an increasing responsibility for their own defense. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 85.)*

4 August-- Three United States servicemen held captive by Hanoi are released in the custody of an American pacifist group headed by Rennard C. Davis. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 85.)*

12 August-- The Communists break an eight-week lull in the war by attacking more than 100 cities, towns and bases across South Vietnam with rockets, mortars and infantry charges. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 85.)*

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15 August-- Sources in the Nixon Administration disclose that a secret contingency plan drawn up with Thailand in 1965 contains provisions for using American troops to help the Thai's oppose Communist forces in Laos before enemy forces cross Thai borders. Some American troops, moreover, would be placed at least nominally under Thai command. The State Department, responding to Senate criticism that this agreement goes beyond US treaty commitments to Thailand, emphasizes that the contingency plan cannot be carried out without the specific agreement of both the US President and the Thai Government. Congressional approval, however, would not be required. The position of the Nixon Administration is that the contingency plan "has not expanded our defense commitment to Thailand beyond that already contained in the SEATO treaty." *(New York Times, 16 August 1969, p. 8.)*

15-16 August-- According to official US statistics released on 15 August, 87.6% of the South Vietnamese people are considered to be under "relatively secure" control as of the end of July. The following day, it is announced that 7,395 Americans have been killed in 1969 through 17 August, compared to 10,796 the previous year for the same time period. This is said to reflect the lower overall level of the conflict in 1969. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 86.)*

20-21 August-- On 20 August, Secretary of State William Rogers declares that the Nixon Administration's policy of disengagement from the war by turning more and more of the fighting over to the South Vietnamese will not be affected by the level of enemy attack unless there is a new and massive assault. Concerning the contingency plan with Thailand, Rogers says that the Administration would "consult" with Congress before using it. The following day, however, Secretary Laird states that the 1965 military contingency plan with Thailand "does not have the approval of this Administration," but that "we have all sorts of contingency military plans." *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 86.)*

21 August-- President Thieu announces that Premier Tran Van Huong has agreed to step aside so that a more broadly based government can be formed. Huong had succeeded Nguyen Van Loc fifteen months ago. On 23 August General Tran Thien Khiem is named Premier and Minister of the Interior. Khiem is a four-star army general and close friend of President Thieu. He had been Deputy Premier, Interior Minister and head of the Pacification Program. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 86.)*

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23 August-- A White House spokesman announces that President Nixon will postpone a decision on the withdrawal of more troops from Vietnam due to the increase in enemy-initiated fighting there. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 86.)*

25-28 August-- US commanders in the Saigon area report that enemy troops have pulled back and that enemy operations now generally consist of small units of fifty to two hundred men attacking for limited objectives. It is reported, however, that the first full North Vietnamese regiment has moved into the Mekong Delta, apparently to reinforce the Vietcong. On 27 August, the Department of State reports that infiltration of North Vietnamese forces into the South has dropped below Hanoi's combat losses. State says that this is "significant" as "what we see is mutual withdrawal." The Defense Department, however, does not agree that the drop in infiltration is "significant", stating that "the enemy is substantially replacing his losses," and "strength remains sufficient for him to conduct operations under the present strategy" of small-scale operations. The following day, Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge tells the 32nd session of the Paris peace talks that the US has reduced the rate of B-52 bombing raids in an effort to reduce the level of violence. *(91st Congress 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 87.)*

31 August-- According to US figures, 89% of the South Vietnamese people are living under "relatively secure" control of the Saigon Government as of 31 August--15.3 million out of a population of 17.3 million. This figure is 84% for those in rural areas. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 87.)*

1 September-- The Chinese send greetings to the Hanoi regime on the DRV National Day. The message states: "Although U.S. imperialism has suffered heavy defeats in its war of aggression against Viet Nam, it will never change its aggressive nature. At present, the Nixon Administration is energetically pushing through counter-revolutionary dual-tactics in an attempt to use political deception and the trick of what it calls 'de-Americanizing war' to attain its goal of perpetuating the occupation of the southern part of Viet Nam...The Soviet revisionist renegade clique has all along worked hand in glove with U.S. imperialism to undermine the Vietnamese people's war against U.S. aggression...We are convinced that the heroic Vietnamese people, led by President Ho Chi Minh, will certainly surmount every difficulty on their road of advance and drive all the U.S. imperialists out of Viet Nam by persevering in protracted war, persevering in maintaining

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independence and keeping the initiative in their own hands and persevering in self-reliance...The Chinese people firmly stand on the side of the Vietnamese people and resolutely support them in carrying the war through to the end until final victory." *(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 36, 8 September 1969, p. 3.)*

2 September-- Xuan Thuy, the DRV's chief negotiator in Paris, declares: "If President Nixon withdraws troops rapidly and in considerable numbers we will examine this factor and take it into account." He dismisses as "unrealistic" suggestions that the two sides accept a truce in present battlefield positions. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 87.)*

2 September et seq.-- On 2 September, the DRV's Vietnam News Agency, in advance of a communique released the next morning, reports that Ho Chi Minh is gravely ill and under intensive medical care. The following day, the same agency announces his death. This is followed by broadcasts over the next several days by Radio Hanoi and the NLF Radio Liberation reporting funeral arrangements, receipt of condolences, appeals to and responses from "Uncle Ho's nephews and neices" and accounts of rites and ceremonies. *(Viet-Nam: Documents and Research Notes, no. 66 (Saigon: US Mission, 1969), p. 1.)*

4 September-- Radio Liberation announces a three-day cease-fire for the (NLF) People's Liberation Armed Forces in order to organize funeral rites for President Ho. The truce will last from 0000 hours on 8 September to 0000 hours on 11 September (Indochina time). This same day, DRV delegate to Paris Xuan Thuy states that Ho's death will bring "no change" in Hanoi's domestic or foreign policies. Moreover, the VC delegation in Paris releases a statement saying that they are "more than ever resolved to wage the sacred struggle against American aggression for deliverance to the final victory." *(Viet-Nam: Documents and Research Notes, no. 66 (Saigon: US Mission, 1969), p. 18; 91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), pp. 87-88.)*

4 September-- The DRV Lao Dong Party issues an appeal to the Vietnamese people which states: "President Ho taught us that 'nothing is more precious than independence and freedom. Our country is one. Our nation is one. As long as a single aggressor remains in our country, we must continue our struggle to sweep him away.' When alive, he thought day and night of our southern kith-and-kin compatriots, having great concern for the reunification of the country...We must patiently step up the anti-U.S. national

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salvation resistance and advance toward defeating U.S. aggression completely, liberating the south, protecting the north, and peacefully reunifying the fatherland." The concern of the Hanoi leaders for unity within the Party and between the Party and the populace is apparent: "President Ho has constantly struggled to strengthen solidarity and unanimity within the party and among our people. Loyal to our great master and upholding the party's valuable traditions, we the Vietnamese communists must endeavor to maintain the solidarity and unanimity within the party, as we protect the pupils of our eyes...Confident in the party's correct line, the masses' strength, and the final victory of the revolution, let all our people unite behind the party and let our entire party tighten its ranks behind the party Central Committee and struggle to the end for independence and unification of the fatherland, for freedom and happiness of the people, and for socialism and communism." *(Viet-Nam: Documents and Research Notes, no. 66 (Saigon: US Mission, 1969), p. 10.)*

6 September-- Hanoi Domestic Service broadcasts an editorial which appeared in Nhan Dan and Hoc Tap, pledging support for the principle of collective leadership. It notes: "Departing from us, President Ho left behind a collective of leadership which he had at great pains built and nurtured. It is a collective of his closest comrades in arms and most outstanding disciples. It is a collective of revolutionary fighters who have been tempered and tested in the long and arduous revolutionary struggle. We pledge to tighten our ranks behind this stable collective of leadership and bravely march forward to fulfill all the tasks of the revolution...President Ho's death has caused great sorrow among the southern compatriots. The southern people and fighters will surely overcome their pains and sorrows and courageously rush forward to step up the concerted uprising and general offensive in order to defeat the U.S. imperialists and their henchmen and to fulfill the national liberation tasks which he considered his goal throughout his entire life." *(Viet-Nam: Documents and Research Notes, no. 66 (Saigon: US Mission, 1969), pp. 27-28.)*

9 September-- Vietnam News Agency broadcasts the funeral oration for Ho Chi Minh, which is delivered by Lao Dong First Secretary Le Duan. Le Duan pledges: "Parting from him forever, we swear: We will forever carry aloft the banner of national independence, resolved to fight and to defeat the U.S. aggressors, to liberate the south, to defend the north, to reunify the country with a view to meeting his desire...The greatest desire of President Ho Chi Minh was to see the fatherland liberated, and the people happy...He also said: The north must advance to socialism... Dear comrades and compatriots: Parting from us, Uncle Ho has left to our party, to all compatriots and combatants in the two zones north and south, a historic will. These are his

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ultimate recommendations, the sentiments and confidence he felt towards us, the present generation and the generations to come...Let us make ourselves still worthier of him! Let us contain our grief, struggle valiantly, eagerly march forward, flatten all obstacles and difficulties, resolved to defeat the U.S. aggressors completely, to build socialism successfully, and to carry out the oath of honour we are taking in this sacred moment of parting!" *(Viet-Nam: Documents and Research Notes, no. 66 (Saigon: US Mission, 1969), p. 44-45.)*

9 September-- A will written by Ho Chi Minh on 10 May 1969 is made public. In this document, the DRV President addresses a number of subjects, as follows:

"Unity is an extremely precious tradition of our Party and people. All comrades, from the Central Committee down to the cell, must preserve the union and unity of mind in the Party as the apple of their eyes.

Within the Party, to achieve broad democracy and to practise self-criticism and criticism regularly and seriously is the best way to consolidate and develop the union and unity of mind in the Party. Genuine affection should prevail among all comrades.

Ours is a Party in power. Each Party member, each cadre must be deeply imbued with revolutionary morality, and show industry, thrift, integrity, uprightness, total dedication to the public cause, exemplary selflessness. Our Party should preserve its entire purity, it should remain worthy of its role as the leader and a very loyal servant of the people...

The Party must work out a good plan for economic and cultural development with a view to ceaselessly raising the living standard of the people.

The resistance war against U.S. aggression may drag out. Our compatriots may have to undergo new sacrifices in terms of property and human lives. In any case, we must be resolved to fight against the U.S. aggressors till total victory...

No matter what difficulties and hardships may lie ahead, our people are sure to win total victory. The U.S. imperialists will have to pull out. Our fatherland will be re-unified...

About the world communist movement: Having dedicated my whole life to the cause of the revolution, the more I am proud to see the growth of the international communist and workers' movement, the more deeply I am grieved at the dissensions that are dividing the fraternal Parties!

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I wish that our Party will do its best to contribute effectively to the restoration of unity among the fraternal Parties on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, in a way consonant to the requirements of heart and reason.

I am sure that the fraternal Parties and countries will unite again.

About personal matters: In all my life, I have wholeheartedly and with all my force, served the fatherland, the revolution and the people. Now if I should depart from this world, there is nothing that I am sorry to have done. I regret only not to be able to serve longer and more.

After my passing away, great funeral should be avoided in order not to waste the time and money of the people.

Finally, to the whole people, the whole Party, the whole army, to my nephews and nieces, youth and children, I leave behind my boundless affection.

I also convey my fraternal greetings to the comrades, friends, youth and children in the world.

My ultimate wish is that our whole Party and people, closely united in the struggle, build a peaceful, unified, independent, democratic and prosperous Viet Nam, and make a worthy contribution to the world revolution." *(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 37, 15 September 1969, pp. 9, 12.)*

16 September-- President Nixon announces that 35,000 more American troops will be withdrawn from Vietnam by 15 December. Reviewing the proposals that he had made toward a settlement, the President urges both sides to turn "their faces toward peace rather than toward conflict and war." A White House source says the new decision is based on three factors: 1. The stalemate since early May in Paris, despite signs of movement; 2. substantial decline in infiltration; and 3. a report by Gen. Abrams indicating improvement in the ARVN. Reviewing his efforts to end the war, the President says that "the only item which is not negotiable is the right of the people of South Vietnam to determine their own future free of outside interference." The President's decision is described by Communists in Paris as "more or less driblets." A Hanoi spokesman states: "We demand the total and unconditional withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam ... There is no other alternative." *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 88.)*

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17 September-- Four American women whose husbands are missing in North Vietnam meet with Xuan Oanh of the DRV peace delegation about the fate of their husbands. They report that he said that anyone seeking information about prisoners would be welcome at the North Vietnamese delegation if he came without US Government sponsorship. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 89.)*

17 September-- The VC Radio Liberation denounces President Nixon's report on additional troop withdrawals as a plot to prolong the war. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 89.)*

18 September-- The New York Times reports that American-backed Laotian Government troops have seized two strategic areas long held by pro-Communist forces in a series of secret military operations over the past three weeks. In Northeast Laos, rightist and neutralist forces, stiffened by Thai soldiers and officers in Laotian uniforms, have seized the Plaine des Jarres, which had been held by the Pathet Lao since 1964. In central Laos, similar forces have pushed east along Route 9. "Reliable sources" report that the Pathet Lao stronghold of Khang Khay has fallen to Government troops fighting with heavy US air and logistic support. These sources say that the Government successes are the result of fully integrated American-Laotian military planning and the most intense American bombing ever seen in Laos. As many as 500 sorties a day are being flown over that country; this increase accounts for part of the reason for the lull in the air war in South Vietnam. American participation in both the Plain des Jarres and Ho Chi Minh Campaigns now extends to the field level. United States planes -- of Air America, Continental Air Services and the US Air Force -- are flying reinforcements, supplies and arms to advanced areas. US Army officers and agents of the CIA are advising local commanders. *(New York Times, 18 September 1969, pp. 1 and 10.)*

20 September-- The Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam issues a statement on President Nixon's speech of 16 September: "...Recently, U.S. President Nixon again announced the withdrawal of additional American troops from south Viet Nam, describing this before the U.N. General Assembly as a peace initiative on the part of the United States. Then he urged public opinion to make the Vietnamese people respond to it...The Vietnamese people, like public opinion in the United States and the world, have pointed out that the pull-out by the United States of 25,000 or 35,000 or even more troops is merely a piece of perfidious deception aimed at appeasing public opinion

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and covering up its scheme to prolong the war and the U.S. military occupation of south Viet Nam...[T]he United States... must end its aggression and withdraw quickly and completely this aggressor army from south Viet Nam...The U.S. President pretends that he respects the south Vietnamese people's right to self-determination, while in fact he is scheming to maintain the puppet administration which is a U.S. lackey, opposing the right to self-determination of the south Vietnamese people, and urging them to surrender and accept the rule of the clique of traitors...The south Vietnamese people ardently cherish peace, but it must be a peace on the basis of independence and freedom. If the Nixon Administration persists in its illusion of securing a position of strength on the battlefield and at the conference table and obdurately prolongs the war of aggression in south Viet Nam, it cannot escape still heavier failures." *(Peking Review, XII, no. 41 (10 October 1969), pp. 27-28.)*

21 September-- The Government of the DRV issues a statement on President Nixon's announcement that 35,000 more US troops will be withdrawn from South Vietnam by 15 December. It says: "...Since the United States has committed aggression in south Viet Nam, it must, therefore, bring this aggression to an end and withdraw all its troops from south Viet Nam without posing any condition whatsoever. Yet, the United States obdurately sticks to its claims about 'mutual withdrawals'...The 35,000 men whose withdrawal has been announced by the United States represents an insignificant part of the half million-odd U.S. troops in south Viet Nam. This trick of troop withdrawal by driblets cannot conceal the fact that the United States obdurately maintains nearly half a million U.S. troops of occupation in south Viet Nam and prolongs the war of aggression. That is precisely the reason why public opinion in the United States and in the world has exposed this perfidious trick of U.S. President Nixon...U.S. President Nixon has also stated that 'the only item which is not negotiable is the right of the people of south Viet Nam to determine their own future free of outside interference.' He is acting as if the United States had respected this right of the south Vietnamese people. In fact, everybody knows that the United States has grossly trampled underfoot the south Vietnamese people's right to self-determination, has rigged up the Saigon puppet administration as a tool of its aggressive policy, and sent U.S. and satellite expeditionary troops to south Viet Nam to wage an aggressive war...It should also be pointed out that since U.S. President Nixon took office, the United States has kept intensifying the war in south Viet Nam; it has made every effort to strengthen the puppet army and consolidate the puppet administration; it has stage-managed a farce of 'cabinet reshuffle,' replaced Tran Van Huong by Tran Thien Khiem, a bellicose militarist and former henchman of Ngo Dinh Diem.

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It has carried on violations of the soveriegnty and security of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. U.S. planes have continued attacking many places in the area from the 17th to the 19th Parallel...Obviously, the United States has not yet given up its aggressive designs. It still entertains schemes to carry out neo-colonialism in south Viet Nam and to prolong the partition of Viet Nam...But the more the United States pursues the war of aggression, the more it exposes itself to humiliating defeats and to condemnation by justice- and peace-loving public opinion in the world and by progressive American public opinion...As long as the United States pursues its aggression in Viet Nam, refuses to withdraw its troops from south Viet Nam totally and without conditions, and clings to the Thieu-Ky-Khiem puppet administration, the Vietnamese people, carrying out the sacred testament of President Ho Chi Minh, are resolved to unite as one man, to brave all sacrifices and hardships, and to fight on till they have achieved their fundamental national rights as recognized by the 1954 Geneva Conference on Viet Nam." *(Peking Review, XII, no. 41 (10 October 1969, pp. 26-27.)*

23 September-- The State Department reports that there are approximately 500 US Governemnt employees assigned to the Embassy in Laos, plus about "330 AID contract personnel" and 1300 American dependents. The AID contract personnel, according to State Department spokesman Carl Bartch, include those working for Air America, Continental Air Service and the International Voluntary Service. He says there are no US "combat troops" in Laos. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 90.)*

24 September-- Hanoi's official Vietnam News Agency announces that Vice President Ton Duc Thang has been chosen to succeed Ho Chi Minh as President of North Vietnam. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 90.)*

24 September-- An "Observer" article in the Soviet journal New Times discounts speculation in the American press as to the consequences of Ho Chi Minh's death for the future of DRV policy towards the war. It further says that "American leaders have hardly any faith in victory. They know how unpopular the Vietnam war is in the United States. But they refuse to reconcile themselves to the inevitability of retreat and try to defer decisions which one day they will have to adopt just the same. What is more, they are trying to create the semblance of a constructive policy with the aid of dramatic gestures and theatrical effects." In the current atmosphere of increased pressure on the Nixon Administration to restore peace in Vietnam, Premier Kosygin, it

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is noted, once again pledged (in a communique published on 10 September) to "give the Vietnamese people the necessary assistance and support in their struggle, in the building of socialism in North Vietnam and the liberation of the South, in the peaceful reunification of the country." *("Observer", "Vietnam and Washington's Illusions", New Times, no. 38 (24 September 1969), pp. 7-8.)*

26 September-- An agreement and a relevant protocol on economic aid to be given by China to the DRV in 1970 are signed by representatives of the two Governments meeting in Peking. *(Peking Review, X, no. 40 (3 October 1969), p. 40.)*

26 September-- At a press conference, President Nixon urges unity on the war, saying that unity will speed up negotiations in Paris. He opposes as "defeatist" arbitrary cut-off dates for terminating the American presence in Vietnam but says that he is trying to end the war by the end of 1970 or the middle of 1971. He expects opposition to his policies, but "under no circumstances will I be affected by it." He says that Vietnamization is moving forward and that the United States will continue to support President Thieu. *(91st Congress 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 90.)*

late September-- China conducts its first underground nuclear test and a new hydrogen bomb explosion. *(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 42, 20 October 1969, p. 11.)*

29 September-- Laotian Government troops with the backing of American planes from Thailand recapture the strategic outpost of Muong Soui, which fell to the Communists in June. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 90.)*

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October-- The Soviet-oriented World Marxist Review carries a historical survey of "US aggression in Laos" from 1954 to the present. Reviewing past charges of American intervention, including widespread political assassination and terrorism, the article states that "ever since July 1964 their Air Force has been bombing villages under the control of the NLHS and the Left neutralists. As in South Vietnam, the aggressors, flying up to 500 missions a day, do not stop at using napalm, phosphorous bombs, and toxic chemicals and carrying out blanket bombing raids...The U.S. press admits that as many bombs are now being dropped on the liberated areas of Laos as were dropped on North Vietnam a short while ago. Newsweek estimates that the air war against the Laotian people costs the United States a billion dollars a year...There are now some 12,000 Americans in Laos, most of them officers, who control the armed forces of the Right, and there is evidence of direct American participation in the military operations. In addition, several thousand Thai and Saigon paratroopers are active in the country, helping the Right...The U.S. Embassy has a staff of almost 500, mostly officers. The 'Peace Corps' operates in the rural areas, mainly training subversive commando groups...American-trained Laotian mercenaries now number close to 70,000. An important aspect of these aggressive operations against the patriotic forces is smuggling behind the lines subversive groups consisting, among others, of Meo tribesmen. The U.S. Air Force supplies them with clothing, food and modern weapons. Saboteurs help the Americans to drive civilians from the liberated areas, involving almost 15,000 people in 1968 alone...In the area controlled by the Right, the Americans try to isolate the population from revolutionary influence by conducting combing operations, setting up 'unity hanlets,' 'rehabilitation zones,' and 'refugee camps,' which are nothing but concentration camps." The usual demands are made that "the United States should abide by the international agreements on Laos, at once stop its bombing of the liberated areas, withdraw all its military personnel from Laos and leave the Laotians to settle their own affairs in keeping with the Geneva Agreements of 1962 and taking into account the present situation." *(Kova Lansang, "U.S. Aggression in Laos", World Marxist Review, XII, no. 10 (October 1969), pp. 52-56.)*

6 October-- With the approach of the Vietnam Moratorium demonstration in the United States, Tran Buu Kiem, who is chairman of the South Vietnam Liberation Students' Union and former chief NLF delegate to the Paris peace talks, addresses a letter to his American sympathizers urging "the active and massive participation of the American youths and students in this fall struggle movement." He contends that "the replacement of a

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score of thousands of troops is insignificant, as compared with about half a million U.S. youths still remaining in South Vietnam...Your interests and those of the American people and the United States do not lie in such a drop-by-drop troop pullout, but in the quick and complete withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Vietnam; not in the Vietnamization or de-Americanization of the war in South Vietnam, which is unpopular and costly in human and material resources, but in ending it...If Mr. Nixon sincerely wants to live up to his promise to end the war, a promise which he made when he ran for office and when he took over the presidency," the Kiem letter continues, "there is no other way than to respond to the 10-point solution of the Republic of South Vietnam's provisional revolutionary government by quickly withdrawing all U.S. and satellite troops from South Vietnam without imposing any conditions and by abandoning the lackey Thieu-Ky-Khiem administration, leaving the South Vietnamese people to decide their own internal affairs...You are entering a new, seething and violent struggle phase. We hope that you all will pool your efforts in achieving great success in this fall struggle phase." *(Washington Post, 15 October 1969.)*

8 October-- The Soviet journal New Times comments that "U.S. aggression in Laos has already reached a scale fraught with the gravest consequences...Interesting details have been reported in the press. The plan for the September military operation was drawn up by American military advisers. The finishing touches were put on at the end of August at secret meetings in Long Cheng, the headquarters of the Rightwing Laotian general Vang Pao, a direct placeman of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, and in Savannakhet, at the headquarters of American advisers who are covertly directing the operations of the 'special forces,' Laotian mercenaries of the CIA, in Central and Lower Laos. It is in place here to recall that there are about 200 U.S. military advisers in the 14,000-strong army of Vang Pao. The advisers operate from the U.S. army base in Udon, Thailand, from what is known as HQ 333. The 'special forces' receive a considerable part of their weapons and ammunition directly from the United States, by-passing, as a rule, the Vientiane authorities." The article notes that: "In addition to political considerations there are also calculations of a military nature, since the autumn of 1967, the Pentagon and the CIA have been trying to carry out the so-called 'McNamara plan'—to link, by the narrow 'Savannakhet corridor' running along Route No. 9, the American military bases in Thailand with the U.S. armed forces in South Vietnam. Simultaneously the seizure of Route No. 9 would sunder, as it were, the liberated areas of Laos. The blow was also spearheaded at the Valley of Jars, one of the key districts of the patriotic forces in Xieng Khouang Province...Since the armed forces of

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the Rightwing Laotian group demonstrated in 1968 and this year their inability to conduct active operations against the combined armed forces of the Patriotic Front of Laos and the League of Patriotic Neutralist Forces, this time the leading part was assigned to the U.S. air force, the Thai interventionists and the Laotian 'special forces'... Units of the regular Thai army played the main part in seizing the towns in the province of Xieng Khouang and along Route No. 9, towns which had been thoroughly demolished by the U.S. air force. Airborne troops were landed under the cover of U.S. aircraft and Thai artillery, which has been confirmed by the American press. The operations were directly led by American military advisers, regular officers of the U.S. armed forces." Nonetheless, the article claims, the interventionists "did not achieve all their objectives...Many important sections of the 'Savannakhet corridor' are controlled, as before, by the patriotic forces...All the American interventionists will succeed in is to escalate the war in Laos." *(I. Shchedrov, "Laos: Escalation of Aggression", New Times, no. 40 (8 October 1969), pp. 20-21.)*

9 October-- In a news conference, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird says that American commanders in South Vietnam have been operating since August under new orders aimed at placing the "highest priority" on shifting the burden of the fighting to the South Vietnamese. Laird says the policy was "protective reaction" rather than "maximum pressure." *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 91.)*

11 October-- The New York Times reports that experts on North Vietnam believe that Hanoi's diplomatic position towards the United States has hardened since the death of Ho Chi Ming. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 92.)*

11 October-- Chou En-lai sends a message of greetings to Pathet Lao Prince Souphanouvong on the 24th anniversary of Laotian Revolutionary Day. He notes: "Since the beginning of this year, U.S. imperialism has stepped up its aggressive activities against Laos, introduced the reactionary troops of Thailand into Laos and launched frantic attacks against the Laotian liberated areas in order to prolong and intensify the war of aggression against Viet Nam. We believe that by persisting in protracted war under the leadership of the Laotian Patriotic Front, the Laotian people...will certainly be able to...win final victory..." The usual non-committal statement of support from "the Chinese people" follows. *(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 42, 20 October 1969, p. 8.)*

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12 October-- Interviewed on "Meet the Press", Secretary of State Rogers says that the war is "being deescalated" by President Nixon and that his strategy is making "tremendous progress." Asked if the enemy is also deescalating, Rogers says, "yes, the combat activity is down" and enemy infiltration is "way down...by two-thirds this year." He thinks that it is possible that the war might "just deescalate until it sort of fades out." Asked about the possibility of a future coalition government for South Vietnam, Rogers says that he would accept this solution if it were the result of free elections. He states that the United States would prefer to see the Thieu government be "broader-based." This same day, the US Command in Vietnam reports that the lull in the Vietnam conflict is continuing and the B-52 missions have been reduced as a diplomatic response to the lull. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 92.)*

13 October-- In a letter to a Georgetown University student, President Nixon comments on dissent. He says that: "If a President ...any President...allowed his course to be set by those who demonstrate, he would betray the trust of all the rest. Whatever the issue, to allow government policy to be made in the streets would destroy the democratic process...there is nothing new we can learn from the demonstrations." *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 92.)*

14 October-- In an open letter to anti-war protesters in the United States, DRV Premier Pham Van Dong says: "Your struggle is a noble reflection of the legitimate and urgent demand of the American people...the Vietnamese people and the United States progressive people against United States aggression and will certainly be crowned with total victory." Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh, leader of the VC delegation in Paris, also addresses her "most friendly salutations" to the demonstrators. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 92.)*

14 October-- The New China news agency reports that Pathet Lao leader Prince Souphanouvong has issued an appeal to his countrymen on the occasion of the 24th anniversary of Laotian Independence Day (12 October). The Chinese describe the appeal as saying: "Though suffering heavy defeats, the enemy are still very obdurate. They keep intensifying the war of aggression, bringing greater destruction upon our fatherland and committing more crimes against our population. They keep stepping up the bombing and nibbling attacks against the liberated zone of Laos and herding

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our people into concentration camps set up in areas under their control. 'But the enemy's sinister schemes can by no means save them from final defeat. The more they prolong the war, the greater their difficulties, the weaker their force, the sharper their internal contradications, and the greater their isolation...We are well aware that on the path to this goal there will be more hardships and trials. But for the survival of our beloved fatherland, we must overcome all obstacles, fearing no sacrifices and hardships.'" *(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 42, 20 October 1969, p. 8.)*

15 October-- At the conclusion of a visit to Peking by an NLF delegation led by Nguyen Huu Tho, a joint communique is issued condemning the US policy of "Vietnamization" as a "sinister, deceptive manoeuvre aimed at dragging out its war of aggression..." The NLF reiterates its pledge to fulfill Ho Chi Minh's call: "So long as there remains a single aggressor on our land, we still must fight on to sweep him away." The basis for a settlement is stated to be the 10-point plan submitted at Paris on 8 May by the NLF/PRG. The Chinese reiterate that they will "firmly give support and assistance in all fields..." They express confidence that by persisting in protracted war, the people of South Vietnam will attain final victory. *(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 43, 27 October 1969, pp. 3-4.)*

15 October-- It is announced in Moscow that the Soviet Union and Hanoi have signed new agreements on aid to North Vietnam and "the granting of new long-term credits." *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 93.)*

15 October-- Vietnam Moratorium demonstrations occur throughout the United States, with a view towards increasing pressure on President Nixon to change his Vietnam policy and accelerate the withdrawal of American troops. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 93.)*

16 October-- At an impromptu press conference, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird says that the United States plans to keep a "residual" force of more than six or seven thousand men in South Vietnam after hostilities have ended. He says that present plans call for the removal of all American combat troops within "a year or two," but that military units engaged in training and advisory roles will remain. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 93.)*

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16 October-- The New China news agency reports on the Vietnam Moratorium of the preceeding day. It notes: "This nationwide struggle against the war proves once again that the aggressive war waged by U. S. imperialism is meeting with stronger and stronger resistance from the American people and that the situation confronting Richard Nixon, chieftain of U.S. imperialism, is becoming more and more difficult... Nixon indicated that he would persist in the sinister policy of aggression in Viet Nam...But intimidation by Nixon and suppression by fascist armymen and policemen can by no means stem the raging waves of the just struggle of the American people against the U.S. war of aggression in Viet Nam. On the contrary, they can only raise the political consciousness of the American people and make them step up their fight." *(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 43 , 27 October 1969, p. 24.)*

16 October-- At the 38th negotiating session at Paris, the Communists revive their call for secret US-VC talks that would exclude the Saigon Government. Ambassador Lodge calls this a "surprise" move and rejects any negotiations in which the RVN are not represented. As to the possibility of negotiating with RVN diplomats, a VC spokesman, at a news conference following the regular session, states that "[t]his is an absurd proposal that we have already rejected. This claim is absurd because it aims at legalizing the administration of Saigon, which as everybody knows was set up by the United States for the purpose of its war of aggression." Most of the regular negotiating session is devoted to Communist charges that President Nixon showed "contempt" for the American people by ignoring the protests of Moratorium Day. They issue a call to Nixon to announce his timetable for withdrawing all US troops from Vietnam. The DRV's Xuan Thuy claims that because Nixon had not fulfilled the peace promises that he had made during his election campaign, "he is now facing the opposition movement of the American people, a movement on a nationwide scale, the strongest and most widespread ever known in the United States... The Americans who participated in the Moratorium Day activities understand they are contributing to the prompt cessation of the war. They will continue to overcome obstacles of all kinds to go farther forward." In response, Ambassador Lodge says that the Communists have blocked the Paris talks by demanding preconditions for negotiations: "The most telling evidence of your lack of serious intent is your persistent refusal to enter into genuine discussion with the government of the Republic of South Vietnam, despite the fact you agree to its full participation in these Paris meetings." *(Ohio State University Lantern, 17 October 1969, p. 6.)*

19 October-- Peking's People's Daily carries a signed article entitled "The American People Will Surely Be Victorious in Their Struggle

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Against the U.S. Imperialist War of Aggression Against Viet Nam". It comments that: "The American people, the Vietnamese people and the revolutionary people of the world have identical fundamental interests. They all stand on the same front against U.S. imperialism. The just struggle of the American people against imperialism at home is a powerful support for the Vietnamese people who are struggling to liberate the south, defend the north and reunify their country; the war against U.S. aggression and for national salvation in which the Vietnamese people are persisting is also a powerful support for the American people who are fighting monopoly capital and the reactionary forces in the United States. In their struggle against their common enemy, U.S. imperialism, the peoples of the world have always supported one another...The painstaking efforts of the Nixon Administration to disrupt, smother and suppress the mass movement of the American people will only arouse their new awakening and fiercer resistance. The American people's struggle against the U.S. imperialist aggression in Viet Nam is bound to surge more violently and will surely be crowned with victory." *(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 43, 27 October 1969, p. 24.)*

21 October-- A broadcast monitored in Vientiane reveals that the Pathet Lao has accused the US of intensifying its "special war" in Laos. Phoumi Vongvichit, Secretary General of the Neo Lao Hak Xat (Laotian Patriotic Front), asserts that the United States has 12,000 military men engaged in the ground war in that country. Letters of protest have been sent to the co-chairmen and other signatory members of the 1962 Geneva Conference. *(New York Times, 23 October 1969), p. 2.)*

23 October-- US Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, in protest against what is said to be the other side's failure to negotiate seriously, refuses to speak formally at the 38th Plenary session of the Paris peace talks. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 93.)*

25 October-- At the end of a meeting between Chou En-lai and Pham Van Dong, held in Peking, a joint communique is issued which states that the talks had proceeded in a "cordial and friendly atmosphere." The two sides exchange complements. The DRV thanks the Chinese for the "genuine and powerful support and great and effective assistance they have consistently given to the Vietnamese people in the latter's war against U.S. aggression..." The communique notes: "The struggle of the people of the whole world against U.S. aggression in Viet Nam is daily surging forward, the U.S. ruling clique is riddled

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with internal contradictions and, beset with difficulties both at home and abroad, the Nixon government is in unprecedented isolation. However, U.S. imperialism will not change its aggressive nature, and it remains most obdurate and cunning." The Vietnamese pledge: "The entire Vietnamese people, resolved to fulfill President Ho Chi Minh's sacred will, will fight till total victory...In order to attain this goal, the Vietnamese people...are persevering in and stepping up the war against U.S. aggression and for national salvation. The correct basis for the settlement of the Viet Nam question is the ten-point total solution put forward by the...[NLF and PRG]." The Chinese issue their standard statement of support and advice: "'The 700 million Chinese people provide a powerful backing for the Vietnamese people; the vast expanse of China's territory is their reliable rear area', and give firm support and assistance to the Vietnamese people...The Chinese people firmly believe that the Vietnamese people, persevering in protracted war, persistently maintaining independence and keeping the initiative in their own hands and firmly relying on their own efforts, will certainly drive U.S. imperialism out of Vietnamese soil..." *(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 44, 3 November 1969, pp. 3-4.)*

26-28 October-- On 26 October, New York Times reporter Henry Kamm states that the United States maintains and controls an army of Meo hill tribesmen, the Armee Clandestine, in Laos. The size of this army is estimated at 40,000 of whom 15,000 are full-time soldiers. Two days later, Senator J. William Fulbright says in an interview that US participation in Laos "is a major operation" costing "in the neighborhood of $150 to $160 million in fiscal 1969." He discloses that this operation has been run by the Central Intelligence Agency, operating under the National Security Council, with the knowledge of the past three Administrations. A State Department spokesman says that "there is no defense agreement with Laos, written, stated, or otherwise." He maintains that assistance to Laos is permitted under Article 6 of the 1962 Geneva Agreements. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 94.)*

27 October-- The New China news agency reports that a "spokesman" for the Neo Lao Hak Xat Central Committee recently issued a statement condemning Thailand's involvement in the war in Laos. This statement is said to have charged that "U.S. aircraft of various types, taking off from the U.S. airbases in Thailand, have carried out ever fiercer bombardments on the liberated areas of the Laotian patriotic forces...To turn Thailand into

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a U.S. imperialist tool for intervention and aggression in Laos...the U.S. imperialists and the reactionary Thailand authorities have built or expanded many strategic communication lines linking Thailand with Laos to transport weapons, ammunition and other war means to Laos. The Thailand mercenary troops have long mingled with the Laotian Rightist forces and they together have occupied numerous localities in Laos...[O]f late, jointly with the Vang Pao bandits and the Laotian Rightist army under the direct command of American 'advisers', the Thailand troops have launched a large-scale attack on the liberated areas in Xieng Khoang Province..." *(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 44, 3 November 1969, pp. 24-25.)*

28 October-- Spokesmen for the Defense and State Departments say that they welcome information about American prisoners of war from whatever channel. However, the Defense Department spokesman says, North Vietnam is attempting to "abuse United States prisoners and their families for propaganda purposes" in working through anti-war groups. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 94.)*

28 October-- The Washington Post reports from Hong Kong that a recent three-day meeting on agriculture in Hanoi disclosed that North Vietnam is suffering from severe food shortages. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 94.)*

30 October-- The State Department reveals that the US had, in the last month or so, asked the Soviet Union to use its influence with North Vietnam to ease the tense situation in Laos. Although not going into details, Department spokesman Robert J. McCloskey says that there had not been "much positive result." *(New York Times, 31 October 1969, p. 3.)*

2 November-- The Soviet Union accuses the United States of opening a new front in a war of aggression against the peoples of Southeast Asia by its actions in Laos. The official Soviet news agency, Tass, reports that a statement by Foreign Minister Andrei A. Gromyko has been sent to the participants in the 1962 Geneva Conference. The statement calls US policy "unrealistic and dangerous" and declares: "The Soviet co-chairman of the conference expresses serious concern over the alarming situation created in Laos as a result of the further widening of the scale of United States interference." *("Peace in Laos— Statement by A. A. Gromyko, U.S.S.R. Minister of Foreign Affairs", trans. DES, Pravda, 3 November 1969, p. 4.)*

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3 November-- In his second major address to the nation on Vietnam, President Nixon argues that "Precipitate withdrawal would lead to a disaster of immense magnitude." He disloses that Ambassador Lodge has held eleven private meetings with DRV negotiators and mentions other contacts that have been attempted, including an exchange of letters between himself and Ho Chi Minh. This same day, the President releases a letter dated 15 July 1969, from himself to Ho Chi Minh in which he repeated US proposals for peace and offered to discuss the NLF's ten points. In his response dated 25 August 1969, Ho Chi Minh criticized the US for conducting a "war of aggression against our people, violating our fundamental national rights," calling the NLF ten-point solution "a logical and reasonable basis for the settlement" of the conflict. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 94.)*

3 November-- The New York Times reports that 5,615 VC defected in the month of October, more than in any other month since the Chieu Hoi (Open Arms) program began in 1963. However, the defectors are relatively low level, and the number of high-level North Vietnamese and VC defectors remains low. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 94.)*

5 November-- An official Vietnam News Agency broadcast characterizes President Nixon's latest policy pronouncement on Vietnam as an "arrogant challenge to public opinion in the United States and the world as a whole." It charges that Mr. Nixon "sought to fool the American people" by contending that his Administration has a "peace plan". The statement says: "It is clear that Nixon's obduracy on the Vietnam issue remains unchanged. In his speech, he deliberately shirked two fundamental problems. The United States must unconditionally withdraw all its troops from South Vietnam...must renounce the Saigon puppet administration and let the Vietnamese people settle their own affairs themselves without foreign interference." Hanoi also questions President Nixon's assertion that Ambassador Lodge had held 11 secret meetings with the Vietnamese Communist representatives at Paris. It claims that the President had "insinuated that 'private meetings' were taking place" in order to "divert public opinion." *(Washington Post, 6 November 1969.)*

5 November-- Three American GI's released by the VC arrive on foot at an American base in South Vietnam. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 95.)*

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6 November-- Pravda, the official newspaper of the Soviet Communist Party, comments on President Nixon's speech which, it says, "is built, not on the premise of ending the aggression and searching out realistic paths to a peace settlement, but on the prolongation of the old policy, a desire to dictate terms 'from a position of strength,' threats and refusal to settle the main problem—immediate withdrawal of the American forces from South Vietnam...The President's speech contained an ample number of appeals for peace and peace-loving phrases. In fact, however, U.S. ruling circles are seeking a method of prolonging the war in Vietnam that will seem more 'respectable.' They want to rearm the forces of the Saigon regime and put them at the front, using American forces for air and naval support. They count on being able thus to withdraw enough American troops from South Vietnam to appease public opinion in the United States. They hope that the portion of American troops present during the 'Vietnamization' of the war will be enough to maintain the Saigon puppet regime with their bayonets...Implementation of the plan to 'Vietnamize' the war can only mean a further complication of the situation in South Vietnam, the undermining of the Paris talks and the heightening of international tension." *(Viktor Mayevsky, "Tactical Impasse", trans. DES, Pravda, 6 November 1969, p. 5.)*

6 November-- Xuan Thuy, the DRV's chief delegate to the Paris peace talks, charges the United States with "breaking its promises" by revealing the secret talks and exchange of letters between President Nixon and Ho Chi Minh. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 95.)*

6-7 November-- On 6 November, the DRV issues a statement on President Nixon's 3 November speech. The following day, the Provisional Revolutionary Government follows suit with its own statement, roughly equivalent in both tone and content to the DRV's declaration. The following analysis and demands are from the PRG document: "As is known to all, since he took office, President Nixon has kept stepping up the war of aggression in south Viet Nam, encroaching upon the sovereignty and security of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and, at the same time, delaying the discussion on the correct solution to the Viet Nam question, thus bringing the Paris conference to a complete standstill... In an attempt to win back a 'position of strength' on the battlefield and at the conference table, the Nixon Administration said it had 'de-escalated the war' while in fact, it continues to exert 'maximum military pressure'...The so-called 'Vietnamization of the war' program of U.S. President Nixon is, in essence, a nefarious policy of using the Vietnamese [to] fight the Vietnamese

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to drag out the war of aggression, realize U.S. neo-colonialism in south Viet Nam and perpetuate the partition of Viet Nam. The piecemeal 'troops withdrawal' and the so-called program for the complete withdrawal of U.S. combat troops mentioned by President Nixon are only manoeuvres to appease the American public, cover up the scheme to keep a large number of American troops in south Viet Nam for a long time, gain time to reinforce the puppet army and consolidate the puppet administration and use them to carry on the U.S. aggressive and neo-colonialist scheme...The Vietnamese and American peoples and the people the world over are demanding that the United States end its aggression, withdraw all U.S. troops and troops of other foreign countries of the U.S. camp from south Viet Nam without posing any condition whatsoever, renounce the dictatorial bellicose and rotten Thieu-Ky-Khiem puppet administration, and let the south Vietnamese people settle their internal affairs free from foreign interference." *(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 46, 17 November 1969, pp. 13-14.)*

7 November-- VC guerrillas attack police posts on the southern edge of Saigon in what is reported to be the first significant ground attack on the city since May 1968. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 95.)*

11 November-- In a meeting with newsmen in Vientiane, a Laotian Communist official displays a list of 158 American airmen held prisoner by the Pathet Lao. He says that 51 of them were shot down over Laos last year and 41 were captured between January and June of this year. United States officials subsequently express their skepticism. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 95.)*

12 November-- Nguyen Huu Tho, heading an NLF/PRG delegation visiting Moscow, expresses to the USSR the Front's "deep gratitude...for the all-round and effective aid and support given to the South Vietnamese patriots in their just struggle." Speaking in an interview, he states that: "Recent blows by the patriots were unique retaliatory strikes. They were dealt to American units conducting punitive operations. The active operations of the patriots show that the initiative rests securely with the people's armed forces of liberation, who have once more displayed their capability and ability to attack any place at any time...These blows refute the rumors of a so-called 'lull,' rumors persistently spread by American propaganda and the Saigon puppets. Through talk about a 'lull,' the aggressors have been trying to conceal their severe defeats on the fronts of South Vietnam." It is claimed that "[p]eople's revolutionary liberation committees...

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exist in 95% of all provinces, 59% of all districts and in 51% of all villages...The formation of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam and the agencies of revolutionary power that have been set up everywhere are events of exceptional importance in the development of the liberation movement in South Vietnam. Therein lies our enormous victory in the struggle against the aggression of the U.S.A...[Moreover] We believe that the front of the people's resistance to the aggressors has great potential for further development. The N.L.F.S.V. and the U.N.D.P.F. are doing everything necessary to realize these possibilities that will gradually lead to the creation of a provisional coalition government in South Vietnam, as was mapped out in the 10-point program...advanced by the N.L.F.S.V..." *("The Courage of a Heroic People", trans. DES, Izvestia, 12 November 1969, p. 5.)*

13 November-- The Soviet Government newspaper Izvestia warns that "the growing meddling by the American military in the internal affairs of neighboring Laos threatens to lead to the opening of a new military front in Southeast Asia...The operations of American aircraft in Laos and U.S. support to the forces of the rightist groupings in that country have enabled the latter to seize a number of important districts for long controlled by patriotic forces. But Washington should remember that these forces have by no means been broken or liquidated...No illusions should be harbored overseas on this score: Actions produce counteractions; and these, as the course of the war in Vietnam has shown, can pose very serious problems for those who start and carry on an aggressive adventure." *(A. Vikentyev, "Fire Will Not Quench the Fire", trans. DES, Izvestia, 13 November 1969, p. 3.)*

14 November-- Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh, chief NLF delegate to the Paris talks, says that if General Duong Van Minh became head of a Vietnamese "peace" cabinet, "we are ready to begin conversations with him." She says a peace cabinet should include all those at home and abroad who favor "peace, independence and neutrality." *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 96.)*

15 November-- An estimated 250,000 people mass at the Washington Monument to call for the termination of the Vietnam War. The demonstration, which is generally peaceful, is the largest ever held in Washington. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 96.)*

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17 November-- American bombers strike enemy guns over the Cambodian border near the US Special Forces camp at Buprang for the second day. The US Command announces that "if fired upon from enemy positions outside South Vietnam, United States forces are authorized to return fire. This is an inherent right of self-defense against enemy attacks." *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 96.)*

18 November-- On this date, Secretary of State William Rogers reports: "We've had numerous diplomatic contacts (with the enemy)...some of them have occurred since the death of Ho. But...we see no immediate prospect for success in the negotiations." *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 96.)*

20 November-- Henry Cabot Lodge and Lawrence Walsh, the two top negotiators for the United States at the Paris peace talks, resign effective 8 December. Philip C. Habib is assigned to be acting chief of the delegation. Lodge says: "It is sad that the other side has flatly refused to reciprocate in any kind of meaningful way." State Department spokesman Carl Bartch notes that Lodge's departure "should in no way be interpreted as any downgrading of the talks or abandonment of hope." *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 97.)*

21 November-- Peking Review comments on the 13-15 November protest demonstrations in Washington, D. C. and other American cities. It states that "[t]his protest action demonstrated anew the resolute fighting mood of the broad masses of the American people in opposing the U.S. imperialist war of aggression against Viet Nam. It reflected at the same time the unprecedented isolation of the American monopolist bloc with Richard Nixon as its champion." *(Peking Review, XII, no. 47 (21 November 1969), p. 29.)*

22-26 November-- On 22 November, Norodom Sihanouk issues a statement denouncing the United States for the "deliberate" bombing and strafing by its air force and the shelling by its artillery of the locality of Dak Dam and the military post at Dak Dam in Mondulkiri Province of Cambodia on 16 and 17 November, which is said to have resulted in losses of life and the destruction of houses and large quantities of military materiel. On 26 November, the Chinese Foreign Ministry issues a statement giving its "firm support" to Prince Sihanouk's "just statement".

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(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 48, 1 December 1969, p. 23.)

23 November-- It is reported that ARVN troops suffered heavy losses in two battles against VC forces in the Mekong Delta 18 and 22 November. The two battles are the first major VC action since the withdrawal of American forces from the area. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 97.)*

24-26 November-- On 24 November, US Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge and DRV Delegate Xuan Thuy issue opposite statements concerning the lack of progress at the Paris peace talks. Lodge declares that it is "not true" that the United States has rejected private talks on "general problems" with the North Vietnamese. He says that "we got nowhere because they refused to consider our proposals." Two days later, following the 44th session of the Paris talks, Lodge says that he is willing to meet privately with the DRV delegation to discuss the future of South Vietnam but that he "was not advocating that we negotiate the imposition of a 'provisional coalition government' on the South Vietnamese." *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 97.)*

30 November-- The New York Times reports that informed Congressional sources have said that the United States had promised to give Thailand economic and military aid totalling one billion dollars over a five-year period in return for the deployment of a Thai division to fight in South Vietnam. State Department spokesman Carl Bartch says on 1 December that "no such arrangement was ever negotiated." But he confirms that the US increased its military and economic aid to Thailand after the Thai Government decided to commit troops to Vietnam. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 98.)*

1 December-- The Supreme Command of the (Pathet Lao) Laotian People's Liberation Army issues a mobilization order for combat in the 1969-1970 dry season to all main force, regional and militia-guerrilla units. *(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 50, 15 December 1969, p. 17.)*

2 December-- North Vietnam's Foreign Ministry issues a statement denouncing the recent talks between President Nixon and Prime Minister Sato of Japan. It charges that the Nixon-Sato communique "shows that the U.S. and Japanese governments are still upholding

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stubbornly the Japan-U.S. 'security treaty' and preserving the U.S. military and nuclear bases on Okinawa...Sato has allowed the U.S. to continue using the U.S. bases in Japan including those in Okinawa after 1972 to serve the U.S. criminal war of aggression in Viet Nam." *(Hsinhua (New China) news agency, no. 50, 15 December 1969, p. 20.)*

3 December-- The Soviet journal New Times comments on the new VC offensive and "Vietnamization". It notes that a "new element has appeared in the fighting of the past few weeks. Seeking to prove the feasibility of their 'Vietnamization' plan and to enhance the reputation of the Saigon army, the U.S. Command has tried to shift the burden of the fighting onto the puppet forces. The latter have been assigned to the most dangerous sectors. The defence of the bases near the Cambodian frontier and in the Mekong Delta has been chiefly entrusted to them. And so it is not surprising that the Saigon army losses in the last few weeks have doubled, amounting to five times those suffered by the Americans. Particularly heavy losses have been sustained by the 18th and 21st puppet divisions. The fighting has shown once again that the Saigon army cannot be relied upon and that its combat efficiency is very low. Even with U.S. air and artillery support, they were unable to retain their positions near the Cambodian frontier and in the Mekong Delta, and only direct American intervention prevented further withdrawals by Saigon troops." *(Col. A. Leontyev, "Liberation Army Offensive and 'Vietnamization'", New Times, no. 48 (3 December 1969), p. 5.)*

4 December-- Henry Cabot Lodge concludes his service as Chief American delegate to the Paris talks by stating at the 45th plenary session that "the only concrete progress here is agreement on the shape of the table." He claims that the obstacle to progress is the Communist side's "absolute refusal to join us in seeking a just peace." *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 98.)*

5 December-- Speaking at a Pentagon news conference, Deputy Secretary of Defense David Packard says that US withdrawals from Vietnam "are going to continue" despite a substantial increase in enemy infiltration. Informed officials say that more than 30,000 troops are moving from North Vietnam to the South. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 98.)*

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8 December-- In a Paris press conference, NLF spokesman Ly Van San states: "If the United States says that it will withdraw unconditionally and in six months all American troops and other foreign troops in the American camp, the parties will discuss the calendar for these withdrawals and guarantees for security during the withdrawal." The proposal is subsequently rejected by Secretary of State Rogers as "nothing new." *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 99.)*

8 December-- State Department officials report that Chinese army engineers are building a road from the Chinese border through Northeast Laos near the Thai border. It is estimated that 7,000 Chinese engineering troops, including guards and anti-aircraft units, are in Laos. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 99.)*

10 December-- The Soviet Government newspaper Izvestia comments on President Nixon's sending of British counterinsurgency specialist Sir Robert Thompson on a fact-finding mission to Southeast Asia. Moscow characterizes Thompson's generally optimistic report as "illusory hopes" and accuses the Nixon Administration of trying "to solve the Vietnam problem by military means." The President is charged with having used Thompson to justify a policy that had already been decided upon. *(M. Sagatelyan, "Whatsoever a Man Soweth", trans. DES, Izvestia, 10 December 1969, p. 2.)*

11 December-- Xuan Thuy, Chief DRV delegate to the Paris peace talks, boycotts the 46th session in protest of President Nixon's "sabotage" in "downgrading" the talks by refusing to name a delegate of ambassadorial rank to succeed Henry Cabot Lodge. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 99.)*

11 December-- The official (North) Vietnam News Agency reports a recent interview of Defense Minister Vo Nguyen Giap, conducted by Ferenc Hegedus, director general of the Hungarian army journal Nephadsereg. Giap is reported as declaring that US attempts to "Vietnamize" the war in South Vietnam would end in tragedy for the ARVN and for withdrawing American troops. Giap terms US policy as "drop-by-drop troop withdrawal," which is nothing more than a subterfuge aimed "at camouflaging its intention to continue the war of aggression." He states that the "U.S. and puppet troops, which have both taken severe beatings, will get yet harder

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ones." Giap also claims that US military activity in Laos is "threatening the security" of the DRV. In answer to a question, he discusses the relative importance of human and material factors in war. He says that "[w]e hold that the decisive factor is man." However, he notes that "we are greatly concerned with equipping our soldiers well" and that it is necessary to "grasp well and master technique, possess courageous and clever methods of fighting and know how to bring into full play the efficacy of every kind of arm." *(New York Times, 12 December 1969, p. 5.)*

13 December-- RVN officials make public a captured VC document which, they say, outlines plans to revert to more traditional forms of guerrilla and political warfare. The document, Resolution No. 9 of the Central Office of South Vietnam (COSVN), urges attacks to inflict casualties on US forces. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 99.)*

14-17 December-- On these dates, a 7-part treatise by Vo Nguyen Giap, entitled "The Party's Military Line Is the Ever-Victorious Banner of People's War in Our Country", is published in Nhan Dan and Quan Doi Nhan Dan. Viet-Nam: Documents and Research Notes summarizes and comments:

"...Giap's newest work may be ranked with Truong Chinh's The Resistance Will Win (1947) and Giap's People's War, People's Army (1959) and Big Victory, Great Task (1967) as a major exposition of the Lao Dong Party's military line.

'The Party's Military Line' differs from Giap's previous major works--which are collections of articles--in that it systematically and comprehensively deals with the Party's military theory, strategy, and tactics, with a minimum of 'propaganda' content. Unlike People's War, People's Army, Giap in his most recent formulation does not characterize the Party's military line as progressing inevitably through a series of phases, but emphasizes flexibility and creativity: 'When it is necessary we must change in time outdated forms of warfare, taking new ones which are more appropriate...We should not apply old experience mechanically, or reapply outmoded forms of warfare.'

The Party's military line, as presented by Giap, is that of a protracted 'people's war,' of 'fighting strength with weakness' and' fighting many with few.' The principle of protracted people's war has always been a fundamental element of the Party's military line, but Giap gives it extraordinary stress when reviewing the previous military experiences of the Vietnamese nation and the Lao Dong Party. And it is perhaps significant that there is bare mention of Dien Bien Phu and no mention of

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such major battles as Ap Bac, Binh Gia, Ia Drang, and Khe Sanh, which the North Vietnamese have hailed as great victories of the 'liberation forces.' When discussing the need to concentrate forces, Giap stresses that when doing so 'we must make careful calculations, economize in the use of forces, use forces rationally...as for numbers, the fewer the better.'

The three-phase progression of guerrilla war, mobile war, and the strategic counter-offensive, which was formulated by Truong Chinh and Giap in earlier works, is not to be found in 'The Party's Military Line.' Giap does maintain that 'guerrilla war must advance to regular war,' but emphasizes that 'The problem in guiding the war is to advance guerrilla war to regular war at the right time and at the right place, to combine closely guerrilla war and regular war in an appropriate manner in each period and on each war theater.' The present 'war-waging formula' of people's war is, according to Giap: 'carrying out armed uprising and revolutionary war, resolutely attacking the enemy both militarily and politically in both the countryside...and the cities, over a long period, combining annihilating the enemy forces with winning and keeping the people's right to self-mastery, maintaining and bolstering our forces...overcoming the enemy segment by segment, until final victory.'

The debate over military policy in North Viet-Nam has centered around the question of the nature of the 'offensive.' According to Giap, 'The revolution is an offensive, uprising is an offensive. The revolutionary war, throughout its existence, is an offensive...' He adds, however, that 'our offensive capability is closely bound to the correct evaluation of the characteristics and development trend of the balance of forces between ourselves and the enemy.' To take the offensive is, to Giap, 'to attack the enemy comprehensively, by both armed and political struggle, by both combat and mass uprisings, by both guerrilla warfare and regular warfare.'

In People's War, People's Army Giap also formulated a three-phase progression of the 'struggle form,' from political struggle to a combination of political struggle and armed struggle, and finally to a stage in which armed struggle is the principal form. In 'The Party's Military Line,' however, he emphasizes flexibility in combining the two forms: 'The combining of political force with military force, political struggle with armed struggle, armed uprising with revolutionary war, is the law of revolutionary violence in our country.' 'The revolutionary war in the South,' he avers, 'is the combination at a new level, in new historic conditions, of armed force with political force.'

Normally, North Vietnamese commentaries on the Party's military line or the war situation are heavily larded with fulsome praise

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for the 'constant, storm-like offensives and uprisings' and give considerable attention to the 'contraditions and insurmountable basic weaknesses' of the American and the 'puppet army and administration.' In his Big Victory, Great Task, which was published in the fall of 1967, Giap declared that 'the puppet army and administration have daily declined' and that 'they will surely arrive at complete disintegration.' He saw no viable options by which the Americans could prevail and predicted that 'the more protracted the war is, the more fierce will be the basic contradictions and weaknesses of the aggressive war of the U.S. imperialists in South Vietnam--contraditions and weaknesses that will lead them to increasingly big defeats.' As for world opinion, Big Victory, Great Task declared that 'the support of the world's peoples for our people has become more and more vigorous,' and that America 'has been disastrously isolated in the world.'

Although in 'The Party's Military Line' Giap insists that 'Our people will certainly win! The U.S. imperialists will certainly be defeated!' and that 'U.S. imperialism...is on the decline,' the document has a remarkably sober tone in comparison to its predecessors. No mention is made of the 'collapsing state' of the 'puppet army and administration' or of the 'growing intensity' of the worldwide anti-war movement. Rather, Giap declares that 'the Nixon Administration continues to plunge deeper and deeper into the military adventure in Viet-Nam' and that it continues to seek a military solution through the 'Vietnamization' policy. This, warns Giap, 'is a challenge to our people, the revolutionary and peace forces worldwide, and American progressives.'" *(Viet-Nam: Documents and Research Notes, no. 70 (Saigon: US Mission 1970), pp. iii.)*

15 December-- In a brief radio and television address to the American people, President Nixon gives a progress report on the war in Vietnam and announces the planned withdrawal of 50,000 more US troops by 15 April 1970. The President cites progress in the Vietnamization program as the reason for the additional withdrawals. He is not optimistic regarding his other two criteria, progress in the Paris talks and the level of enemy activity, however, and reports that "infiltration has increased substantially." He warns the North Vietnamese against continued increases in infiltration and states: "There has been no progress whatever on the negotiating front since November 3." He names Philip Habib, acting negotiator, as head of the American delegation, giving him the personal rank of ambassador. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 100.)*

18 December-- The Washington Star reports that DOD's new estimate of enemy troop strength is 290,000. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 101.)*

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18 December-- In a statement broadcast in Hanoi, the National Liberation Front says that it is "ready to create any condition" necessary to allow American and other non-Vietnamese troops to "rapidly and safely withdraw from South Vietnam." *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 101.)*

late December-- Both the North Vietnamese army newspaper, Quan Doi Nhan Dan, and the Party newspaper, Nhan Dan, publish a major article by Van Tien Dung, who is Chief of Staff of the People's Army of [North] Vietnam. Viet-Nam: Documents and Research Notes summarizes and compares this treatise to the essay published by General Giap earlier in the month:

"Both the Giap and Dung articles avoid dogmatic formulations of strategies and 'struggle forms' passing through distinct phases, but stress flexibility. 'We do not bind ourselves to any fixed form or method of struggle,' claims Dung, for 'The practical conditions of our fight...constantly change and, therefore, do not permit us to mechanically utilize our own combat experience which is no longer practicable.' And like Giap, Dung takes as his central theme the strategy of prolonged, comprehensive people's war. The art of people's war is, according to Dung, 'the art of using weakness to defeat strength, the few to defeat the numerous, and of unremittingly developing our forms, methods, and scales of attack...'

As for the 'two combat forms,' both guerrilla warfare and concentrated, big-unit warfare have, according to Dung, 'played an important strategic role.' In an earlier article on the Party's military line Dung claimed that 'Regular war is the backbone of guerrilla war, and plays the decisive role in annihilating the enemy's manpower and winning ultimate victory.' But in the present article he stresses that 'The combination of these two combat forms...constitutes a problem of decisive significance for the development and success of the armed struggle.'

In discussing tactics, Dung focuses on the concepts of 'using few to fight many' and 'using quality to defeat quantity.' Such tactics, says Dung, 'requires of our officers and men great efforts, unusual courage, heroism, resourcefulness, mobility, and flexibility,' that 'we avail ourselves of good occasions to attack the enemy when and where he is negligent,' and that 'we highly develop the factors of surprise and secrecy.' 'In striking,' he warns, 'we should avoid large enemy troop concentrations...' and should attack 'in the way chosen by us and which does not allow the enemy to make use of his favorite forms of fighting.' The basic principle of concentrating troops, as formulated by Mao Tse-Tung and Vo Nguyen Giap, is 'to realize

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overwhelming superiority over the enemy where he is sufficiently exposed.' According to Dung, however, 'we have eliminated every military formula according to which attack can only be launched when we possess more numerous armed forces...than does the enemy.'

Such emphasis on 'using few to fight many' and 'using quality to defeat quantity,' however, does not mean a total abandonment of 'concentrated attacks': 'Our military art,' states Dung, 'finds no opposition between the use of the few to fight the numerous and the launching of major attacks to score great victories and the rational concentration of forces to exterminate the enemy.' Dung quotes Lenin in saying that 'It is necessary to show that one possesses a stronger force at a decisive moment and in a decisive place.'

An important aspect of the 'military art of the revolutionary war' is, according to Dung, combining the military struggle with the political struggle, -- 'closely coordinating the annihilation of the enemy with the regaining and expansion of the people's mastership,' -- for 'only by realizing the people's mastership while annihilating the enemy can we develop our strength.' 'The armed forces must know how, where, and when to exterminate the enemy in order to support the people's uprisings to regain mastership over rural and urban areas,' he avers; and to do this, he adds, 'it is necessary to eliminate the local administrative personnel and spy servitors of the enemy.'

Although Dung touches on such factors as the 'support of world progressives' for the NLF and the anti-war protests in the United States, and claims that the Americans are 'sustaining heavy defeats on the battlefield,' he neither stresses the 'collapsing state' of the 'puppet army and administration' nor declares the 'liberation forces' to be on the verge of victory. Rather, Dung emphasizes that when evaluating the situation it is necessary to take the long view, to understand fully 'the revolution's fundamental problems -- such as the revolutionary line, objectives, driving power, and methods, the mass nature of violence and so forth, and the characteristics of the present era...the era of transition from capitalism to socialism on a world scale.'" *(Viet-Nam: Documents and Research Notes, no. 71 (Saigon: US Mission, 1970), pp. iii.)*

23 December-- In a news conference, Secretary of State William Rogers says that enemy infiltration into South Vietnam has dropped since the beginning of December and is down by 60% compared with last year. He also claims that the climate of world opinion towards the United States has "been greatly improved because of our change of policy in Vietnam." *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 101.)*

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26 December-- It is reported in Saigon that the number of VC defectors has dropped sharply in recent weeks to about half the average of the last several months. In the first week of December, 1032 VC rallied; this figure, however, dropped to 638 last week. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 101.)*

30 December-- At the year's final meeting of the Paris peace talks, US delegate Philip Habib presents a list of 1,406 Americans missing in action in Southeast Asia and asks for negotiations on the prisoner of war issue. The Communists, however, say that the problem must wait for an overall solution of the war. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 102.)*

31 December-- The Associated Press reports that large, mobile VC forces remain among the Vietnamese population in only one-fifth of the 45 provinces of South Vietnam and that VC guerrilla units are understrength. It is estimated that there are 80,000 armed guerrillas in the South and an equal number of members of the VC government. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 102.)*

31 December-- A State Department report lists 19,157 civilians killed by VC terrorist action from 1965 to 30 December 1969. This does not include figures for February 1968, but the Government of South Vietnam claims that 7,400 civilians were killed in the Tet Offensive of that month. A total of 32,174 civilians have been abducted and nearly 36,000 have been wounded since 1967 by the VC. Figures from Saigon indicate that 202,778 civilians were admitted (since January 1967) to South Vietnamese and US military hospitals as of 30 November due to war-related causes. *(91st Cong 2nd Sess, Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam (6th Revised Edition), Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 102.)*

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Hoc Tap	-- Lao Dong Party, NVN
Hsinhua (New China)	-- Peking's News Agency
International Affairs	-- Soviet Union
Izvestia	-- Soviet Government organ newspaper
Jenmin Jih Pao (People's Daily)	-- Chinese Communist Party
Kommunist	-- Soviet Communist Party
Krasnaya Zvezda	-- Soviet Ministry of Defense newspaper
New Times	-- Soviet
Nhan Dan	-- Vietnam Working People's Party
Peking Review	-- Chinese People's Republic
Pravda	-- USSR newspaper
Quan Doi Nhan Dan (newspaper of People's Army)	-- DRV
Red Flag	-- Belgian Communist
Red Flag	-- Chinese
Tass	-- Soviet organ
Thong Nhat	-- NVN Weekly
Trud	-- Soviet Labor newspaper
World Marxist Review	-- International Journal

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