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FORM OF DOCUMENT	CORRESPONDENTS OR TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
#2 report	summary record of NSC Meeting No. 518 top secret SAINT 1720 NSC letter 10-24-88	02/10/65	A
#4 report	meeting of principals top secret SAINT 1720 5-26-88	02/11/65	A
#6 maps & pictures	various maps and pictures top secret	9 p undated	A
#8 cable	#21501 top secret	undated	A
#10 memo	SNIE 10-2-65 top secret	02/10/65	A
#11 memo	SNIE 10-3-65 top secret	13 p 02/10/65	A
#13 cable	JCS 004973 top secret	undated	A
#15 cable	Saigon 2462 secret	2 p undated	A

FILE LOCATION

NATIONAL SECURITY FILE, National Security Council File
NSC Meetings, Vol. 3 Tab 30, 2/10/65, Vietnam

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.4

REF ID: A66833

By NARA. Date 2-11-88

SUMMARY RECORD OF NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING NO. 548
Wednesday, February 10, 1965, Cabinet Room, 2:10 P.M.

SUBJECT: Vietnam

(See attached list of participants)

NOTE: Minutes of a meeting of these participants prior to the arrival of
the President are attached. (Tab A)

Secretary McNamara summarized for the President the latest information on the Viet Cong bombing of the enlisted men's barracks at Qui Nhon. As of that time, one U.S. soldier was known to be dead, 20 injured, and 20 missing. Presumably, the missing soldiers are buried under the rubble of the billet.

Mr. McGeorge Bundy summarized the discussion of the Council members prior to the President's arrival. A response to the Qui Nhon incident by the U.S. in some form is agreed by all present. However, there is a difference as to what the response should be. Some believe we should not launch another raid while Kosygin is in the Far East. Some feel an attack now might force the Chinese Communists and the Soviet Union together.

Acting Secretary Ball reported that the Soviet reaction to the earlier attack on North Vietnam had so far been mild. Mr. Kosygin is leaving for North Korea at 3:00 P.M. today our time. He probably will try to enlist the support of the North Koreans for the holding of the March 1 meeting of Communist Parties which the Soviets are planning despite Chinese Communist opposition. Kosygin is expected to stay two days in North Korea. U. S. Action now puts heavy pressure on the Soviets. We should hold off any reprisal action until Kosygin leaves the area. Ambassador Thompson added that our objective should be to avoid any deeper Soviet commitment to the North Vietnamese. If the Chinese Communist Air Force comes in in response to our retaliatory attack, very heavy pressure is put on the Soviets to come to the aid of the Vietnamese.

Secretary Dillon said he did not believe the Russians would make a major policy decision based on the whereabouts of Kosygin.

Mr. McGeorge Bundy pointed out that we cannot put ourself in the position of giving the Russians control over our actions by their moving Soviet diplomats from one place to another. If we take no action, the Soviets may think we are in fact a paper tiger.

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Director McCone said that to base our action on a possible Soviet reaction would be to lose sight of our objective which is to help the South Vietnamese overcome aggression.

Secretary McNamara said that Ambassador Taylor, the Joint Chiefs and the Department of Defense recommended a retaliatory strike today at daylight. He said we will soon be facing the difficulty of taking Phase II actions even though there are no incidents created by the Viet Cong. However, the Qui Nhon attack provides us an opportunity today to retaliate immediately. He explained to the President the targets in North Vietnam which could be hit today. They are: Target 14, the Thanh Hoa bridge, which he said he would discuss later; Target 24, the Chanh Hoa army barracks, and Target No. 53, the Phu Vam supply depot, as a weather alternative. In addition to these two U.S. targets, he recommended that Target No. 32, the Vu Con barracks, be struck by the Vietnamese Air Force, assisted by U.S. planes with Target No. 39, the Chap Le barracks, as a weather alternative. (See attached target map with descriptions.) (Tab B)

Mr. McGeorge Bundy said that at an appropriate time we could publicly announce that we had turned a corner and changed our policy but that no mention should be made now of such a decision.

The President stressed the importance of preventing any leaks to newspapers. He appealed to the patriotism of those present and asked the Heads of Departments and Agencies present to survey their departments to ensure that leaks were not coming from their subordinates.

In response to the President's question, the Acting Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Admiral McDonald, said he agreed with Secretary McNamara's recommendation. From a military point of view there is no reason to delay a strike.

The President asked what our team in Saigon recommended. Secretary McNamara read parts of a message from General Westmoreland recommending (Tab C) immediate reprisals. (Copy attached) Mr. McGeorge Bundy said that, having talked to Ambassador Taylor recently, he could summarize his views as follows: Reprisals should be undertaken at once, not only to improve morale in South Vietnam but also to give a clear signal to the North Vietnamese. He would not think that Communist behavior would be basically changed if we decided to delay a U.S. strike.

Secretary McNamara said the United States has overwhelming air power in the Southeast Asia area. The Joint Chiefs do not want to add more military power to that already in the Western Pacific. However, he thought that we should move additional forces into the Southeast Asia area for political reasons. He

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suggested that rather than announce the movement of these forces into the area we could informally give the press the list of U.S. forces which have been placed on alert for short notice movement to the Western Pacific.

In response to the President's question, Secretary McNamara said about 130 planes would be used in the strike recommended for approval. He then said he would drop Target 14, the Thanh Hoa bridge, which is much further north than any of the other targets. He suggested that Target No. 53, the Phu Van Support Depot be put in the plan instead of the prestige bridge recommended earlier. He felt that three targets were needed, two for the United States and one for the Vietnamese Air Force to attack. In response to question, he said the targets were not related to the railroad system because damage done to railroad tracks could be easily repaired.

Secretary Ball suggested that today's retaliatory strike be limited to two targets.

The President interrupted to ask whether any casualties had been reported as a result of the earlier strike. Mr. McGeorge Bundy replied that Hanoi had given no casualty figures but merely admitted there had been a loss of life.

There followed a discussion as to whether the last raid by the South Vietnamese had been successful. Secretary McNamara reported that after-battle information revealed that the South Vietnamese planes had hit a target other than the one they were supposed to hit.

The President asked whether all those present agreed we should launch a retaliatory strike.

In response to the President's direct question, the Vice President said he had some doubts as to whether the strike should take place today or whether it should be delayed until Mr. Kosygin left the area. He had mixed feelings about whether we should retaliate as Secretary McNamara had recommended. He shared the State Department's view that Kosygin's presence in Hanoi or in the Far East limited our freedom of action.

Acting Secretary Ball repeated his view that our action should be cautious. He said the strike as now planned, i. e., deleting the Thanh Hoa bridge, minimized the effect on a possible Soviet reaction to the strike.

Ambassador Thompson recommended that the strike be delayed for a few days. He thought we should first give warning that the North Vietnamese must stop their aggressive action now or we would end the safe haven which they now have in North Vietnam. If they then continue their activities we should launch

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Phase II of our December plan for graduated military pressures.

McGeorge Bundy summarized briefly the latest U. S. intelligence estimate of Hanoi's reaction to a new U. S. air strike. (A copy is attached.) (Tab D)

The President suggested we discuss our position with the Soviet Ambassador, possibly sending a message to the Soviet officials as to why we have to react the way we are. McGeorge Bundy said Ambassador Dobrynin gave Ambassador Thompson yesterday a "personal" message from the Soviet Government which had a governmental rather than a personal tone.

The President asked whether we had any other channels of communication. He recalled the Seaborn channel. He was reminded of the conversations which are apparently being carried on informally by the French in Paris.

There followed a discussion of how much news should be made public following the air attack. The consensus was that we should not spell out in detail exactly what we had undertaken to do.

The President raised the question as to whether there should be Congressional consultation. He also asked whether the time had come for him to make a TV speech. He indicated his reluctance to state again what he had said many times previously.

The President then expressed an interest in any possible targets in South Vietnam. In response, Secretary McNamara said there were no worthwhile targets they had been able to find in South Vietnam.

Acting Secretary Ball said we must emphasize South Vietnam's participation in the air attacks. Selecting only two targets, one for U. S. forces and one for the South Vietnamese forces, meant that the operation would be smaller than previously planned. The two targets chosen were closer to the demarcation line and thus an attack on them would be less likely to pull in the MIG airplanes based in North Vietnam.

The President said it had been proper and necessary for us to go into great detail publicly about our first raid in order to reassure the press but he did not think it is necessary following the proposed strike. Public statements should be limited to a generalized description of the new strike.

The President received affirmative answers when he asked Director McCone, Secretary Dillon, and Director Rowan whether they agreed with the recommended strike plan. Mr. Moyers said he thought the strike should be made to meet domestic public opinion requirements.

McGeorge Bundy summarized the consensus that news of the new strike should be released Thursday in Saigon and that special emphasis should be given

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to the joint U. S. - South Vietnamese character of the action.

Secretary McNamara then proposed that the strike be limited to two targets and that the justification for the strike would be a public statement separate from a report of the action.

The President authorized execution of the strike plan as revised. (The execution ordered is attached.) (Tab E)

As the meeting broke up, the President reviewed a draft State Department telegram to Saigon giving Ambassador Taylor guidance on the political situation in South Vietnam. (Draft telegram attached.) (Tab F)

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NIJ 86-272

By [signature], NARA, Date 2-14-89

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 11, 1965

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MEETING OF PRINCIPALS

Wednesday, February 10, 1965
Cabinet Room, 1:30 p. m.

- Participants:
- Vice President Humphrey
 - State
 - Under Secretary Ball
 - Ambassador Thompson
 - Assistant Secretary Bundy
 - Ambassador Unger
 - Defense
 - Secretary McNamara
 - Deputy Secretary Vance
 - Asst. Secretary McNaughton
 - JCS
 - Admiral McDonald
 - Treasury
 - Secretary Dillon
 - CIA
 - Director McCone
 - USIA
 - Director Rowan
 - White House
 - McGeorge Bundy
 - Chester Cooper

Secretary McNamara raised several questions with respect to retaliation for the attack on the enlisted men's barracks at Qui Nhon (Biet Cuong Hotel):

1. Should we retaliate? -- McNamara thought we should with a joint US-GVN operation;
2. When should we retaliate? -- McNamara felt strongly that this should be done at the first daylight opportunity;

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3. Against what targets? -- McNamara recommended three targets: two just north of the 17th parallel (barracks), and one 50 miles north (supply base).
4. What should be the rationale for retaliation? -- McNamara felt we should point to the recent terror against South Vietnamese civilians, including the blowing up of a railroad bridge, and the blowing up of the barracks.

Much of the rest of the discussion centered on the timing and composition of the attack. State (especially Ball and Thompson) and Vice President Humphrey felt that we should hold up the attack until Kosygin had returned to Moscow, or, in any case, until after he left Peiping following his visit to North Korea. The argument centered on the effect of an immediate attack on Sino-Soviet relations and the degree of commitment the Soviets might be forced to make. State felt that Kosygin's trip to North Korea was an affront to the Chinese and that an immediate attack would submerge or paper-over the difficulties that the Chinese and Russians would otherwise confront when Kosygin saw the Chinese on his way back to Moscow.

If a retaliatory strike were to be launched immediately, State felt that it should be a GVN rather than a U. S. effort. McNamara, and most of the others present, felt that the President would be hard-pressed to explain to the American people why U. S. planes did not retaliate immediately, especially in light of our reprisal against the Pleiku incident.

While recognizing the merit of this, Ball emphasized that the biggest single question we confronted was how to avoid a substantial Soviet commitment to North Vietnam. Such a commitment might be postponed or minimized if we could delay our reprisal, or if the VNAF alone made an immediate reprisal.

Most of the participants discounted the effectiveness of a VNAF attack. McNamara pointed out that the VNAF attack had hit the wrong target the night before and, in any case, the difference between a VNAF strike and one which would involve U. S. planes would not make a significant difference in terms of the Soviet reaction.

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This phase of the meeting ended with several people, including McGeorge Bundy and Thompson and the Vice President, musing on the merits of delaying the retaliation for a few days, not only because of the Sino-Soviet matter but because of the remaining dependents.

The President joined the group at approximately two o'clock, at which time the NSC meeting began (to be reported on separately by Bromley Smith).

CLC
Chester L. Cooper

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

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MESSAGE CENTER

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4
NJ 86-269
By ug, NARA, Date 10-4-87

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COMBINED RETALIATION
1. TWO COMMUNIST OUTRAGES TODAY
MERIT COMBINED REPRISALS. DUC
PHONG MERITS REPRISAL IN GEN
KHANH'S JUDGEMENT BY VNAF;
THROUGH RETURNS ON QUI NHON NOT IN
AMB TAYLOR AGREES IT MERITS
IMMEDIATE REPRISAL FROM US POINT
OF VIEW. REPRISALS CLEARED BY AMB
WITH ACTING PRIME MINISTER.
2. RECOMMEND FOLLOWING TARGETS
FOR FORCES INDICATED:
A. VNAF: PRIMARY NBR 32 VU
CON BKS; 24 STRIKE A-1H 8 F100
FLAK SUPPRESSION: MIG
CAP. PROVIDED BY 2ND AIR DIV ACFT ON MIG CAP FOR NBR 24.
SECONDARY NBR 39 CHAPLE BKS AREA
B. 2ND AIR DIV PRIMARY NBR 24
CHANH HOA BKS 28 STRIKE F-105;
12 FLAK SUPPRESSION F-100; 12
MIG CAP F-100. SECONDARY TGT NBR 33.
C. 7TH FLEET: DECOY PLUS DESTRUCTION
VINH SON RADAR. WEIGHT OF ATTACK
AND COVER OPTION OF TASK FORCE
COMMANDER. DESTRUCTION OF THIS
RADAR WOULD BE OF GREAT ASSIST TO
34A WAROPS.
D. TOT TO BE DETERMINED AND
PROMULGATED BY COM 2ND AIR DIV.
GP-3
BT

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INFO.....CJCS-2(1-2) DJS-3(3-5) SJCS-1(6) J1-1(7) J3-6(8-13) J4-2
(14-15) J5-2(16-17) SACSA-5(18-22) DIA-4(23-26) NMCC-2(27-28)
SAMAA-1(29) SECDEF-5(30-34) ISA-9(35-43) PA-1(44) WHITE HOUSE-3
(45-47) CSA-2(48-49) CSAF-2(50-51) CNO-2(52-53) CMC-5(54-58)
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DIA, J3

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

10 February 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR THE UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

SUBJECT: SNIE 10-2-65: COMMUNIST REACTIONS TO POSSIBLE US ACTIONS

1. The attached draft estimate has been approved by the Board of National Estimates after consideration of it by the USIB representatives.

2. This estimate has been placed on the agenda of the USIB meeting scheduled for 1000, Thursday, 11 February.

Joseph Seltzer jcs
JOSEPH SELTZER
Executive Officer
National Estimates

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

10 February 1965
Draft No. 3

SUBJECT: SNIE 10-3-65: COMMUNIST REACTIONS TO POSSIBLE US ACTIONS
(Formerly SNIE 11-6-65)

THE PROBLEM

To estimate Communist reactions, particularly Soviet reactions, to a US course of sustained air attacks on North Vietnam.

SCOPE NOTE

This US course is presumed to start with a public declaration outlining the new policy and linking it to the entire range of Viet Cong guerrilla and terrorist activity in South Vietnam. This declaration, we further presume, makes it clear that the US means to go beyond specific reprisals for individual major Viet Cong actions and to continue air attacks until the threat to South

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Vietnam has been reduced to levels which the US regards as tolerable. We consider in this estimate present Communist attitudes and Communist reactions, particularly Soviet reactions, in the period before and during continuing air attacks, and during any period when these attacks are suspended.

THE ESTIMATE

The Present Situation

1. Reversing Khrushchev's policy of minimum involvement in Southeast Asia, the new Soviet leaders have over the past several months begun to reassert the USSR's interest, particularly in Vietnam. Kosygin's visit to Hanoi is the latest step in this process. We believe that, in embarking on these tactics, the Soviet leaders hoped to work Hanoi back toward a middle position in the Sino-Soviet dispute, to discourage the US from broadening the war, and to participate in the Communist victory which they expected. To these ends, the USSR probably planned to offer to strengthen North Vietnamese air defenses and to provide equipment for use in insurgency and subversion.

2. The recent VC attacks and US/GVN reprisals probably cut across Soviet calculations. The US course of action under consideration here would further undermine these calculations and force the Soviets to reconsider; indeed, they are probably already doing so. In the meantime, however, they have already reconfirmed their commitment to North Vietnam, albeit in general terms, with a government statement promising "further measures to safeguard the security and strengthen the defensive capability" of the DRV.

3. DRV tactics at the moment are influenced to some extent by Hanoi's reading of current Soviet policy. Soviet public statements after the attacks of last weekend had a cautionary flavor, and we believe that Kosygin's private representations to Hanoi were of a similar nature. Nevertheless, there is a good chance that Hanoi will choose to maintain a high level of VC pressures in South Vietnam, including attacks against US facilities. China for its part is almost certainly seeking to sharpen the Soviet dilemma of a choice between support for the DRV, whatever the dangers of confrontation with the US, or a withdrawal which Peiping could portray as confirmation of its case against Moscow.

Key Uncertainties

4. At the outset, the Communists would have to determine how to interpret the new policy declared by the US. We believe that they would understand that the US did in fact intend a course of sustained pressure against North Vietnam. Even at the beginning, however, they would see some chance that their own threats and international pressures could succeed in averting air attacks or keeping them at a low level. Unless attacks continued regularly and frequently thereafter and the US Government displayed a consistent determination to persevere, the Communists would tend to doubt that the US would long sustain this course of action.

5. Another important initial uncertainty relates to timing. In the course of reasserting their interest in Vietnam, the Soviets may have extended specific commitments, including offers of military aid, of which we are not yet aware. Or they may do so between now and the time when the new US policy is announced. In either case, the USSR's freedom to disengage in reaction to the new US program would be reduced, although not entirely eliminated.

Soviet Reactions

6. It is possible that, once the US had demonstrated the seriousness of its intentions, the Soviets would revert to a policy

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of minimum involvement. But we think it unlikely that they would do so; their commitment to date probably has already carried them past this point. Although the Soviets would perceive military risks in more direct involvement, they would expect to be able to keep these at a tolerable level and far removed from the Soviet homeland. They would also expect difficulties in their relations with Washington, but the new leaders have thus far shown themselves at least as concerned to win the support of other Communists and anti-Western radicals as to carry forward a detente with the US.

7. We believe that the Soviet response to the US program of air attacks would consist both of a vigorous diplomatic and propaganda effort to bring the US to the conference table and the provision of military support to North Vietnam. The extent and nature of the latter are difficult to predict. It would almost certainly include anti-aircraft artillery and radars. In order to provide a more effective defense against US air attacks, however, North Vietnam would almost certainly press for surface-to-air missiles or even advanced jet fighters. These systems

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would, at the present time, have to be installed and operated by Soviet personnel.*

8. In considering these advanced systems, the USSR would recognize that missile sites and fighter bases in North Vietnam would be highly vulnerable to US attack. The Soviets would appreciate that successful attacks on these targets would face them with a choice of accepting the damage, substantially boosting their involvement in the defense of the DRV, or becoming party to even more provocative escalation, e.g., by attacks on South Vietnamese airfields or even US carriers. It may be that, rather than open up these dangers, the USSR would refrain from providing SAMs and fighters. Yet a refusal to satisfy North Vietnamese requests for this kind of aid would be costly to the Soviet position, the more so if such aid had previously been promised.

9. On balance, we think that the chances are about even that the Soviets would provide some SA-2 defenses to North Vietnam. Such a move would run counter to the preferred Soviet tactics of

* In the case of the SA-2 missile system, the USSR would need two and more probably about three weeks to provide a limited operational capability in North Vietnam after a decision to do so. Advanced jet fighters could be provided more quickly. (Note: The DIA representative reserves his position on time periods pending clarification of the air transportability of the SA-2 system.

increasing their commitments only when the dangers of confrontation have begun to recede. But the present degree of Soviet involvement, plus the political costs of failing to provide support in the circumstances under consideration, might outweigh this in the present case.

10. If the Soviets should provide SA-2s, we believe that they would do so in ways calculated to minimize the initial risks to them. One likely way of doing this would be to deploy some SA-2 defenses for the key Hanoi-Haiphong area, hoping that this degree of involvement would serve to restrain the US and still not engage Soviet personnel in actual fighting. SA-2s deployed in this area, however, probably would be used if attacking US aircraft came within their range. By providing Soviet personnel in the guise of "technicians," the USSR would preserve the option of ignoring any Soviet casualties.

11. This would be a fairly limited Soviet involvement, but it would represent a greater commitment to North Vietnam than has obtained in the past. In this situation of increased risks, we believe that the USSR would be seeking means to curb the conflict. This effort would consist both of threats against the US and of

attempts to mobilize international pressures on the US to negotiate, probably in the Geneva forum.

12. If these efforts failed, however, the Soviets might in time advise Hanoi to damp down operations in South Vietnam or even to entertain a political settlement on terms not completely unacceptable to the US. This would be a delicate operation for the USSR; the DRV would charge that what was needed was not less Viet Cong aggressiveness but more effective Soviet assistance, and Peiping would almost certainly take the same line. We cannot at this time predict whether the USSR would try this approach nor, if it did, what the results would be.

13. Elsewhere in the world, general Soviet policy would harden against the US. This would tend to preclude moves toward a relaxation of tensions and to increase the USSR's verbal ugliness on other East-West issues. The new leaders, however, have in any event not been inclined to date to move very far toward detente. Nonetheless, we think it highly unlikely that they would react to the US course of action considered here by deliberately provoking a major crisis in some other area of the world, e.g., Berlin or Cuba.

DRV Reactions

14. Initiation of the new US policy almost certainly would not lead Hanoi to restrain the Viet Cong; Hanoi might even increase the level of activity in South Vietnam. Pressures might be stepped up in Laos at the same time. The anger and emotion with which the US program would be received in Hanoi might affect its calculations. In any case, the DRV would wish to avoid an impression of weakness at the outset. Moreover, it would have some doubt about US staying power on its new course and would hope that Sino-Soviet competition would maximize the support provided by both allies. If the US persevered in the face of threats and international pressures, and its attacks began to inflict severe damage on North Vietnam, the chances of a reduction in Viet Cong activity would rise (see paragraph 18).

Chinese Reactions

15. China would be equally violent in castigating the new US course. There is a fair chance that Peiping would also introduce limited numbers of Chinese ground forces as "volunteers" into North Vietnam, intending to raise the specter of further escalation, to underline its commitment to assist the North Vietnamese, and

to challenge the Soviets to extend corresponding support. More extreme Chinese reactions -- such as introduction of large-scale ground force combat units into North Vietnam or northern Laos -- would be possible, though we think this unlikely at this stage.

Use of Communist Aircraft

16. A special problem for the Communists lies in the fact that only three North Vietnamese airfields, all located in the northern part of the country, are fully capable of sustaining jet fighter operations.* Fighters would thus have difficulty in engaging US/GVN aircraft attacking targets in the southern part of North Vietnam. Furthermore, the Communists recognize that US retaliation against these airfields would be feasible and effective. These considerations apply to the use of Soviet or Chinese fighters in North Vietnam as well as to the interceptors which the DRV might be able to put into the air with Soviet or Chinese assistance. Despite these limited capabilities,

* At Kien An in northern North Vietnam and at Vinh and Dong Hoi in southern North Vietnam, there are airfields on which jet fighters (including MIG-21s) can land and take off, but none of these fields has ancillary facilities sufficient to support sustained operations. Thus, while North Vietnam has six fields with runways adequate for jet fighters, only three (Phuc Yen, Hanoi/Gia Lam, Haiphong/Cat Bi) can support sustained jet fighter operations.

the Communists probably would employ the fighters based in North Vietnam against the US air attacks. If US air attacks reached the northern part of the DRV, China might react over North Vietnam with fighters from its own bases.

17. The Communists could react by launching air attacks against South Vietnam from North Vietnamese or Chinese bases. We think this unlikely because of the vulnerability of North Vietnamese bases and China's reluctance to risk retaliation against its own territory.

A Possible Communist Tactic

18. If at some point the Communists had become persuaded of the durability of the new US policy, they might adopt tactics designed to provide a respite. This might come about if US attacks were inflicting severe damage and if, at the same time, the US had made clear an intention to reduce or cease its attacks in return for a sharp reduction of Viet Cong activity in South Vietnam. In these circumstances, the DRV might order such a reduction and use the ensuing period for a major buildup, assisted by its allies. Such a buildup might include extensive SA-2 deployments, additions to jet fighter strength in North Vietnam and southern China,

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and large-scale deployments of DRV and Chinese ground forces suitable for rapid invasions. The Communists might expect that they could complete these preparations without US interference, and that thereafter the US would be deterred from resuming its program of air attacks when Viet Cong activity was again stepped up.

The Coordination of Communist Policy

19. It is obviously to Communist advantage to appear unified, and they will make great efforts to convey this impression. Heightened military conflict would itself exert strong pressures for effective unity. Nevertheless, we have at several points indicated our belief that the USSR and China act as competitors in North Vietnamese affairs and that they would continue to do so during a period of sustained US air attacks on North Vietnam. We have also pointed to complex and conflicting interests which make for delicate relations -- and difficult communications -- between Hanoi and both its allies. We think it likely that policy coordination among the three Communist countries involved will be chronically imperfect and occasionally quite erratic. Hence,

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Communist policies and reactions will at times be faltering and uncertain and at others bold to the point of rashness. In any case, since Communist policies will be constantly fashioned and refashioned to meet a constantly changing situation, they will be difficult to foresee very far ahead.

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SUBJECT: REPRISALS (S)

REF: JCS 004926

1. THIS IS AN EXECUTION MESSAGE. DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS ON 11 FEBRUARY 1965, SAIGON TIME, CONDUCT THE FOLLOWING COORDINATED ATTACKS:

- A. FOR US FORCES - PRIMARY TARGET 24 - CHANH HOA BARRACKS
- ALTERNATE TARGET 33 - DONG HOI BARRACKS
- B. FOR VNAF - PRIMARY TARGET 32 - VU CON BARRACKS
- ALTERNATE TARGET 39 CHAP LE BARRACKS.

2. PARAGRAPH 2, ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS OF REF APPLY, EXCEPT DO NOT REPEAT NOT USE THIA BASED AIRCRAFT.

3. REQUEST FLASH REPORTS OF LAUNCH, STRIKE, RECOVERY AND RESULTS. GP-3

BT

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4
NJ 86-270
By up, NARA, Date 5-29-87

~~TOP SECRET~~

F

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OUTGOING TELEGRAM

SECRET

Amembassy SAIGON IMMEDIATE

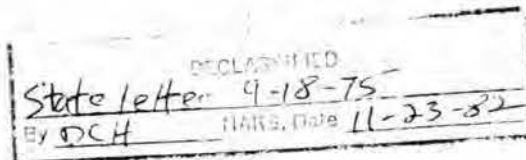
LIMDIS

Saigon's 2462

We share your views about Vien's personal qualifications. We will be following cables to learn how his meeting with Armed Forces Council comes out. Would like, however, to make certain observations on situation Saigon which ^{we think} you should bear in mind in connection with any further conversations about formation of Government, in event Vien does not take Premiership.

Central issue as we see it is that GOVT must reflect power realities in SVN today. Two predominant elements are military and Buddhists and believe any government which does not take their power into account not likely have much life expectancy.

We agree that any government worthy of the name cannot tolerate continuous disorder fomented by Buddhists. However, rather than encouraging formation of government in which confrontation with Buddhist appears likely, is there not still possibility of finding formula acceptable both to military and Buddhists? An example

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OUTGOING TELEGRAM

to Saigon (comtd)

- 2 -

SECRET

would be, in case of Premier who does not satisfy Buddhist dissidents, appointment of a DEF PRIM with some experience and prestige such as Tran Van Do, Phan Huy Quat, Bui Diem or even Tran Van Chuong. (We hold no particular brief for anyone of these civilians, all of whom are presumably acceptable to Buddhists, nor can we judge their relative acceptability to military.) We recognize that you as well as we are aware of the difficulties involved in our, once again, getting into position of trying to shore up a government besieged by both military and Buddhists. Almost any government that is supported by these two factions (provided it is not neutralist) would be better than finding ourselves again in that position.

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SERVICE SET

16

ATTENDANCE LIST FOR THE 548th NSC MEETING
FEBRUARY 10, 1965, AT 2:00 PM IN THE CABINET ROOM
OF THE WHITE HOUSE

The President of the United States, Presiding

The Vice President of the United States

CIA

John A. McCone, Director

DEFENSE

Robert S. McNamara, Secretary
Cyrus Vance, Deputy Secretary
John McNaughton, Assistant Secretary (ISA)

JCS

Admiral David L. McDonald, USN, Acting Chairman

STATE

George Ball, Acting Secretary
William P. Bundy, Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs
Llewellyn E. Thompson, Ambassador-at-large
Leonard Unger, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs

TREASURY

C. Douglas Dillon, Secretary

USIA

Carl T. Rowan, Director

WHITE HOUSE

McGeorge Bundy
Jack Valenti
Bill Moyers
George Reedy
Chester Cooper
Bromley Smith