

# Doubts at Two Poles

The two dissenters from the view that "calculated doses of force" would bring Hanoi around were, at opposite poles, the Joint Chiefs and the intelligence agencies.

"The J.C.S. differed from this view on the grounds that if we were really interested in affecting Hanoi's will, we would have to hit hard at its capabilities," the account says. The Joint Chiefs wanted the United States to demonstrate a willingness to apply unlimited force.

Their bombing plan, deleted from the position paper before it was presented to the President, asserted that the destruction of all of North Vietnam's major airfields and its petroleum supplies "in the first three days" was intended to "clearly . . . establish the fact that the U.S. intends to use military force to the full limits of what military force can contribute to achieving U.S. objectives in Southeast Asia . . . The follow-on military program—involving armed reconnaissance of infiltration routes in Laos, air strikes on infiltration targets in the D.R.V. and then progressive strikes throughout North Vietnam—could be suspended short of full destruction of the D.R.V. if our objectives were achieved earlier."

The analyst remarks that the Joint Chiefs' plan was "shunted aside because both its risks and costs were too high," but the author does not attempt to evaluate the possible effect of his plan on Hanoi's will.

Like Mr. Ball, the account says, the intelligence community "tended toward a pessimistic view" of the effect of bombing on the Hanoi leaders.

The intelligence panel within the Bundy working group, composed of representatives from the three leading intelligence agencies—the C.I.A., the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research and the Pentagon's Defense Intelligence Agency—"did not concede very strong chances for breaking the will of Hanoi," the author writes.

## Analysis of Enemy Policy

"The course of actions the Communists have pursued in South Vietnam over past few years implies a fundamental estimate on their part that the difficulties facing the U.S. are so great that U.S. will and ability to maintain resistance in that area can be gradually eroded—without running high risks that this would wreak heavy destruction on the D.R.V. or Communist China," the panel's report said.

If the United States now began bombing, the panel said, the Hanoi leadership would have to ask itself "a basic question" about how far the United States was willing to step up the war "regardless of the danger of war with Communist China and regardless of the international pressures that could be brought to bear. . . ." The decision of the Hanoi leadership was thus uncertain for a number of reasons, the panel cautioned, and "in any event, comprehension of the other's intentions

would almost certainly be difficult on both sides, and especially, as the scale of hostilities mounted."

The panel then cast doubt on the so-called Rostow thesis of how much Hanoi feared destruction of its industry. This thesis, named for its proponent, Walt W. Rostow, chairman of the State Department's Policy Planning Council, underlay much of the Administration's hope for the success of a bombing campaign.

The panel said: "We have many indications that the Hanoi leadership is acutely and nervously aware of the extent to which North Vietnam's transportation system and industrial plant is vulnerable to attack. On the other hand, North Vietnam's economy is overwhelmingly agricultural and, to a large extent, decentralized in a myriad of more or less economically self-sufficient villages. Interdiction of imports and extensive destruction of transportation facilities and industrial plants would cripple D.R.V. industry. These actions would also seriously restrict D.R.V. military capabilities, and would degrade, though to a lesser extent, Hanoi's capabilities to support guerrilla warfare in South Vietnam and Laos. We do not believe that such actions would have a crucial effect on the daily lives of the overwhelming majority of the North Vietnam population. We do not believe that attacks on industrial targets would so greatly exacerbate current economic difficulties as to create unmanageable control problems. It is reasonable to infer that the D.R.V. leaders have a psychological investment in the work of reconstruction they have accomplished over the last decade. Nevertheless, they would probably be willing to suffer some damage to the country in the course of a test of wills with the U. S. over the course of events in South Vietnam."

## No Change of Policy

As in the case of earlier intelligence findings that contradicted policy intentions, the study indicates no effort on the part of the President or his most trusted advisers to reshape their policy along the lines of this analysis.

One part of the intelligence panel's report that the Administration did accept was a prediction that China would not react in any major way to a bombing campaign unless American or South Vietnamese troops invaded North Vietnam or northern Laos. The study indicates that this analysis eased Administration fears on this point.

Chinese reaction to systematic bombing of North Vietnam was expected to be limited to providing Hanoi with anti-aircraft artillery, jet fighters and naval patrol craft. The panel predicted that the Soviet role was "likely to remain a minor one," even where military equipment was concerned. However, the Russians subsequently sent large-scale shipments of formidable antiaircraft equipment to North Vietnam.