

# Excerpts From 1969 National Security

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 25—Following are excerpts from National Security Study Memorandum 1, the 548-page study of the Vietnam war ordered by Henry A. Kissinger, President Nixon's adviser on national security, at the request of the President on Jan. 21, 1969. The document was made available to The New York Times, which supplied the headings that appear on the excerpts.

## Bombing of North Vietnam

### C.I.A.

Almost four years of air war in North Vietnam have shown—as did the Korean war—that, although air strikes will destroy transport facilities, equipment and supplies, they cannot successfully interdict the flow of supplies because much of the damage can frequently be repaired within hours.

The major effects of the bombing of North Vietnam were extensive damage to the transport network, widespread economic disruption, greatly increased manpower requirements and the problems of maintaining the morale of the people in the face of personal hardships and deprivation. Hanoi was able to cope effectively with each of these strains, so that the air war did not seriously affect the flow of men and supplies to Communist forces in Laos and South Vietnam. Nor did it significantly erode North Vietnam's military defense capability or Hanoi's determination to persist in the war. Material losses resulting from the bombing were, for the most part, offset by increased imports from Communist countries.

Communist military and economic aid to North Vietnam to a large extent offset the physical destruction and the disruptive effects of the U.S. bombing and were instrumental in maintaining the morale of the people. Communist countries provided all of the weapons; enough food, consumer goods and materials to compensate for the domestic output, and most of the equipment and materials to maintain the transport system. Without Communist aid, most of it from the Soviet Union and China—particularly given the pressures generated by the bombing—the Vietnamese Communists would have been unable to sustain the war in both South and North Vietnam on anything like the levels actually engaged in during the past three years.

The amount of Communist economic aid delivered annually has grown from a yearly average of less than \$100-million through 1964, to \$150-million in 1965, \$275-million in 1966, \$370-million in 1967 and \$460-million in 1968. The value of Communist military aid increased from an average of less than \$15-million a year during 1954-64 to \$270-million in 1965, \$455-million in 1966 and \$650-million in 1967. With the restricted bombings of the heavily defended northern part of the country in 1968, military aid deliveries were reduced. At least 75 per cent of total military aid since 1965 has been for air defense.

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## Study of Vietnam War

## Requested by Nixon

North Vietnam's air defenses significantly reduced the effectiveness of the U. S. bombing, resulted directly or indirectly in the loss of almost 1,100 U. S. aircraft and provided a psychological boost to morale. Before 1965, the Soviet Union had provided North Vietnam with only ground forces equipment, transport and trainer aircraft and small naval patrol craft, while China had provided MIG-15/17 jet fighters, motor gunboats and ground forces equipment. Since early 1965, the U.S.S.R. has provided North Vietnam with most of its air defense systems, including surface-to-air missiles, jet fighters, a radar network and antiaircraft artillery. Chinese military aid since 1965, much smaller than that from the U.S.S.R., has been important primarily in building up North Vietnam's ground forces, including reequipping Communist ground forces in South Vietnam with the AK-47 assault rifle, the 107-mm rocket and other new weapons.

All of the war-essential imports could be brought into North Vietnam over rail lines or roads from China in the event that imports by sea were successfully denied. The disruption to imports, if sea-borne imports were cut off, would be widespread but temporary. Within two or three months North Vietnam and its allies would be able to implement alternative procedures for maintaining the flow of essential economic and military imports. The uninterrupted capacities of the railroad, highway and river connections with China are about 16,000 tons per day, more than two and a half times

the 6,300 tons per day of total imports overland and by sea in 1963, when the volume reached an all-time high.

Two principal rail lines connect Hanoi with Communist China, with a combined capacity of over 9,000 tons a day. Eight primary highway routes cross the China border, having a combined capacity of about 5,000 tons per day. In addition, the Red River flows out of China and has a capacity averaging 1,500 tons per day.

### Joint Chiefs of Staff

The Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that resumption of an interdiction campaign similar to that carried out in Route Package I between July and 1 November 1968 would assure almost total interdiction of truck and waterborne movement of supplies into the demilitarized zone and Laos. Naval blockade offshore and interdiction of Region Package II to Thanhhoa would further enhance this effort.

Commitment of B-52 forces following heavy and unrestricted suppression of defenses by fighters, could reduce the amount of time to accomplish the above.

There is not sufficient data available at this time on either the cost or the effectiveness of an air campaign against these land lines to reach a firm conclusion as to the chances of isolating NVN from her neighbors. Past attempts to cut rail, road and water networks in NVN have met with considerable difficulties. It has been estimated that a minimum of 6,000 attack sorties per month would be required against the two rail lines from China. Even at this level of effort, the North Vietnamese could continue to use the rail lines to shuttle supplies if they were willing to devote sufficient manpower to repair and Transshipment operations.

It is not possible to give a definitive amount to the question of how much war-essential imports could come into NVN if sea imports are denied and a strong air campaign is initiated.

The act of sealing off the enemy's Cambodian supply lines must be considered as an integral part of any plan to prevent supplies from reaching enemy forces in the Republic of Vietnam.

It is generally agreed that a feasible method for analyzing Arc Light effectiveness has not yet been devised. Field commanders are lavish in their praise. COMUSMACV recently stated that Arc Light was his strategic reserve and had the equivalent combat punch of two divisions. No one has been able to quantitatively support such claims (or disprove them). Hard evidence on the effectiveness of the Arc Light program is difficult to find. Certainly some strikes are highly effective. Some are clearly wasted. The majority have an undetermined impact.

The J.C.S. estimate that 41,250 enemy were killed in 1968 by all in-country B-52 strikes. This is an average of 2.5 enemy killed per sortie.

Office of the Secretary of Defense estimates of enemy killed by Arc Light are much lower than those of the J.C.S.

If this average enemy casualty rate is extrapolated to include all B-52 strikes, Arc Light apparently has killed approximately 17,000 enemy since 1965 (3.9 per cent of total enemy losses) and will cause 8,000 deaths in 1969.

### State Department

There was a good deal more evidence on the nature of the strain produced by the bombing than on their significance. U.S. intelligence indications, including, inter alia, the observations of travelers to North Vietnam, the opinions of the Hanoi diplomatic community (notably the Canadians and British), North Vietnamese public radio broadcasts, aerial photography and the testimony of NVN P.O.W.'s in South Vietnam, of fishermen captured off the coast of North Vietnam and of the Spanish repatriates—all underscored the fact that the U.S. bombing was a matter of concern to the North. This evidence indicated that it was clearly having an impact and was generating strains throughout North Vietnam. The

bombing is estimated to have caused North Vietnam economic and military losses totaling just under \$500-million. In addition, there were many additional losses that could not, in the intelligence community's opinion, be assigned any meaningful values.

Unfortunately, the available intelligence indicators were relatively silent about the significance of these strains, i.e., about their cumulative ability to deter Hanoi from political and military policies unacceptable to the U.S. In theory, there was an upper limit to North Vietnam's capacity simultaneously to continue the defense of the North and the big-unit war in the South. The bombing undoubtedly pushed Hanoi closer to that limit, but it was not possible to determine precisely (1) where the limit lay and (2) how far from it Hanoi was at any given time. Hanoi's

## Glossary

ARC LIGHT—Code name for B-52 Bombing  
C.I.A.—Central Intelligence Agency  
CINCPAC—Commander in Chief, Pacific  
COMUSMACV—Commander, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam  
D.I.A.—Defense Intelligence Agency  
DMZ—Demilitarized zone  
GUN—Government of South Vietnam  
J.C.S.—Joint Chiefs of Staff  
N.V.A.—North Vietnamese Army  
N.L.F.—National Liberation Front (Vietcong)  
NVN—North Vietnam  
RVNAF—Republic of (South) Vietnam armed forces  
SVN—South Vietnam  
U.S./F.W.—United States/Free World forces

decisions to change from protracted war to the Tet offensive and then to negotiations may be seen as indications it was approaching that limit, but it obviously still had considerable reserve capacity at that time.

# Withdrawal of U.S. Forces

## Joint Chiefs of Staff

The Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that the essential conditions for a cessation of hostilities include an effective cease-fire, verified withdrawal to North Vietnam of all North Vietnamese personnel (including those in Laos and Cambodia), verified cessation of infiltration, substantial reduction in terrorism, repatriation of U.S. prisoners, agreement to re-establish the demilitarized zone with adequate safeguards, no prohibition against U. S. assistance to insure that the RVNAF is capable of coping with the residual security threat and preservation of the sovereignty of the GVN.

It may not be possible for negotiations to achieve agreement in full on all of the essential conditions. However, the degree to which the essential conditions can be achieved as a result of negotiations is crucial to the determination of whether "victory" has been achieved or a strong non-Communist political role assured.

Achievement of the essential conditions for cessation of hostilities is contingent upon continuation of the U.S. effort and improvement of the RVNAF. It is inconceivable that the essential conditions could be realized as a result of an early unilateral reduction of U.S. military effort.

## Office of Secretary of Defense

There is a need within the U.S. Government for agreement on the essential conditions for a cessation of hostilities.

The following is a suggestive list of criteria:

A. Restoration of the demilitarized zone defined in terms of the 1954 Geneva accords,

B. Mutual withdrawal of forces in accordance with the Manila communiqué and as security conditions permit. The required security conditions are: (1) respect for the DMZ; (2) no attacks on the major cities; (3) no infiltration to replace troops withdrawn; (4) no attacks on units which have been designated by either side to the other for withdrawal and which are in the process of withdrawal.

C. Withdrawals include: (1) all North Vietnamese forces whether or not they are fighting in North Vietnam's units to include regroupees; and (2) the withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops in Laos and Cambodia.

D. An agreement on inspection and verification machinery. We would be prepared to rely upon our unilateral means of surveillance.

E. Release of all U.S./F.W. personnel held by the NVN/M.F.

## C.I.A.

The difference in estimates [of total enemy strength between the C.I.A. and D.I.A. on the one hand and CINCPAC/MACV on the other] may become of major political importance if developments in Paris should lead to an agreement on the phased withdrawal of NVA troops which intelligence might be required to confirm or monitor.

# Enemy Capabilities

## State Department

Should Communists decide to risk heavy losses, they have the capability to launch large-scale offensives in one or more parts of the country, particularly in III Corps. These offensives could include ground assaults or attacks by fire against any number of secondary provincial centers and allied installations, a general heightening of minor actions and harassment throughout the country, and/or a strong counter effort against the pacification campaign. There may also be some "dramatic" incidents, involving perhaps the infiltration of sapper units and some combat squads into Saigon or other major urban areas, the brief seizing of a section of a provincial capital and a devastating attack against a model pacification area or refugee centers. Such military successes as might be achieved would be only temporary and would not approach the scale of Tet 1968. By a careful choice of targets and tactics, the enemy might be able to hold down

his casualties; any major commitment of troop, however, would cost him dearly.

## Joint Chiefs of Staff

The enemy retains a significant capability to launch offensive actions in South Vietnam (SVN) at times of his own choosing and on a broad scale within the next six months. However, it is doubtful that he can successfully carry off a large-scale offensive and achieve "dramatic" results on a par with the Tet offensive of last year.

Again from a purely quantitative standpoint, the enemy could launch an attack through the demilitarized zone (DMZ) with an equivalent strength of two divisions, an attack against Danang by the equivalent of about one division, and an attack against Saigon with a strength of up to four or five divisions.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) believe that the allies in SVN have the forces and means to defeat an enemy offensive and that this is quite apparent to the Communists.

# Circumstances of Negotiations

## State Department

Hanoi decided to negotiate for a number of reasons related to its estimate of the course of the war and its chances for success. Mainly, it came more and more to realize that it could not win the conflict by continued military and international political pressure, and that it would have to negotiate in order to make the American forces leave. It also sensed that the constitutional structure in South Vietnam, supported by the South Vietnamese Army, was developing in a manner which might preclude

NLF participation unless the NLF could be negotiated into the picture.

Combined with these realizations was a desire to reduce the scale of the conflict, or at least to end the bombing. North Vietnam was beginning to feel greater pressure toward the middle and latter part of 1967, as the bombing became heavier. The Communist leadership also became worried that it was losing members of the important southern cadre element in its southern structure at a rate which, if continued over a long time, would leave the Vietcong unable to compete effectively in the

South. It wanted to open possibilities for greater emphasis on political warfare, and also to reduce the chance that the U.S. might escalate further.

But Hanoi's concern about its prospects for winning was not accompanied by any feeling that it had lost the war and that it needed to surrender. On the contrary, in fact, the Communist leaders felt distinct cause for pride because North Vietnam and the Vietcong, even with large amounts of Soviet and Chinese aid, had resisted U. S. military pressure for several years and had not been beaten. They also believed that U.S. public opinion was beginning to tire of the war, and they believed that election year politics in the United States offered them an opportunity to profit from this attitude. Although the election is now over, the Hanoi leaders continue to believe that public pressure will force the U. S. Government to end the war. One reason Hanoi is negotiating is because it believes that we will have to look for compromise formulas in the talks, and that its own intransigence, coupled with continued military initiatives, will add to public pressures on the Administration to make such compromises.

However, the North Vietnamese leadership recognizes that such a settlement will not be easy to obtain, and that it may take some time before the U. S. is prepared to grant terms which the Communists now consider acceptable. The leadership therefore hopes to continue to exert military and political pressure against us, and particularly against the South Vietnamese Government, in order to force or persuade us to accept Communist terms. At the same time, the leadership recognizes that its own southern structure may suffer further under continued warfare.

Thus the Communists are negotiating under pressure, just as they think we are negotiating under pressure. Some of the same pressures which drove them to negotiate will also drive them to modify their own terms and conditions over time. The Communists will want to pick the best possible moment for compromise, when we have yielded on the things which they consider vital but before they themselves have had to give up anything of critical importance. This will require delicate and sensitive timing. It is thus not correct to say that the Communists are not negotiating "seriously." They are negotiating seriously, in the sense that negotiations are an important element in their strategy, and that they would like to see the war end by a negotiated settlement favorable to themselves. But the

required evolution in their position will come slowly.

Although there is strong evidence of constructive Soviet effort over this period, one must balance this appraisal with the observation that the North Vietnamese may at times have employed the Soviets as intermediaries to convey positions upon which they had already decided themselves, so that they would not have to "lose face" by making the concessions directly to us.

Even with this caveat, however, the record would appear to support the conclusion that since May, 1968, the Soviets have employed their influence over Hanoi in a generally constructive direction both as to timing and substance. From all indications they will continue to stake out tough Hanoi bargaining positions, to explore U.S. thinking and, whenever they consider it warranted, to utilize their leverage upon Hanoi in measured, highly selective and carefully timed fashion.

### Military Community

(Including the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the American command in Saigon).

As far as our knowledge of how Hanoi thinks and feels, we see through the glass darkly if at all.

Notwithstanding, all echelons generally agree that the preponderance of evidence indicates that North Vietnam is in Paris because of a decision that it would be less costly to get the bombing stopped and to negotiate the U.S. out of North Vietnam (SVN) than to continue fighting for another 5 to 10 years.

On the basis of intelligence derived from analysis of Hanoi's known diplomatic relations with China and the Soviet Union; reports from third-country diplomats; and continuing study of public and private statements by officials of the three countries, there does not appear to be significant pressure by Moscow or Peking on North Vietnam. Both can be expected, however, to continue their efforts, public and private, to influence North Vietnamese decisions in Paris and in the conduct of the war. At best, the Chinese probably hope to impress on Hanoi that any Paris settlement will not alter China's support for wars of national liberation throughout Southeast Asia, while the Soviets presumably are husbanding their influence in the hope of having decisive impact either to prevent a breakdown or achieve a breakthrough in the negotiations.

# South Vietnamese Forces

## State Department

Assuming that all U.S. forces and all NVA forces—fillers as well as organized units but not regroupees—were withdrawn from South Vietnam, the RVNAF alone should be able to cope with the remaining Vietcong. As the RVNAF modernization and improvement program advances, the ability of the Government forces to make inroads into the VC military-political apparatus and to reduce the level of the insurgency will be enhanced. Even spokesmen for the other side (e.g., Tran Buu Kiem and Wilfred Burchett) have recently made reference to their concern for the fate of the Vietcong if the North Vietnamese troops were pulled out.

If NVA regular units were withdrawn but NVA personnel remained in Vietcong units as fillers, the relative balance would be more difficult to assess. Under these circumstances it would probably be necessary to provide the RVNAF with sufficient U.S. combat support to make up for its deficiencies until the entire modernization and self-sufficiency program were completed.

Under current and foreseeable circumstances, it will probably take a minimum of two years before structural and technical reforms can make any substantial contribution toward RVNAF fighting effectiveness. The more critical deficiencies — motivation, discipline and leadership — are essentially deeper and longer-term problems, some arising out of complex socio-political traditions and others greatly dependent on the prevailing political and military environment. A clearly accelerating favorable military trend highlighted by ARVN battlefield successes could have considerable effect on RVNAF motivation and morale. A stable political situation, and particularly one in which the top military leadership is

united and secure, would favorably effect discipline and lower-level leadership.

## Military Community

RVNAF is making fairly rapid strides in improvement and effectiveness and the prognosis for a self-sufficient force designed to hold its own against an internal threat is good. RVNAF will continue to overcome its recognized endemic problems such as lack of leadership, difficulties with the population, etc. The J.C.S., CINPAC and COMUSMACV are inclined towards this view.

RVNAF is making only limited progress due primarily to recent inputs of U.S. resources, to U.S. combat activity, and to a perception that U.S. forces may withdraw. Significant improvement to RVNAF is limited because of constraints of the present military and political systems. RVNAF must take major political and military action, some of which are not now under way, to become an effective force in the near future. D.O.S. is inclined towards this view.

Without major reforms within the RVNAF command and selection system; however, it is unlikely that the RVNAF as presently organized and led will ever constitute an effective political or military counter to the Vietcong. Moreover, as the Government of Vietnam's (GVN) major presence in the countryside, the RVNAF as presently constituted will only continue to widen the gap which exists between the Government and the rural population. Thus, any program of priority changes must have as its primary purpose the provision of an interval during which maximum pressure can be exerted in the GVN to make the necessary organizational and political changes commensurate with the assumption of a larger role in the political struggle and the war.