

# Note on a Plan for Intervention

*Supplemental note to a paper entitled "Concept for Intervention in Vietnam," Oct. 11, 1961. According to the Pentagon history, the paper was drafted mainly by U. Alexis Johnson, Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, and was either a "talking paper" for a meeting that included Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Secretary of Defense McNamara "or a revision put together later in the day, after the meeting."*

As the basic paper indicates, the likelihood of massive DRV and Chicom intervention cannot be estimated with precision. The SNIE covers only the initial phase when action might be limited to 20-25,000 men. At later stages, when the JCS estimate that 40,000 US forces will be needed to clean up the Viet Cong threat, the chances of such massive intervention might well become substantial, with the Soviets finding it a good opportunity to tie down major US forces in a long action, perhaps as part of a multiprong action involving Berlin and such additional areas as Korea and Iran.

Because of this possibility of major Bloc intervention, the maximum possible

force-needs must be frankly faced. Assuming present estimates of about 40,000 US forces for the stated military objective in South Vietnam, plus 128,000 US forces for meeting North Vietnam and Chicom intervention, the drain on US-based reserve forces could be on the order of 3 or 4 divisions and other forces as well. The impact on naval capabilities for blockade plans (to meet Berlin) would also be major. In light of present Berlin contingency plans, and combat attrition, including scarce items of equipment, the initiation of the Vietnam action in itself should dictate a step-up in the present mobilization, possibly of major proportions.