

~~Top Secret~~



FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam

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27 March 1968

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Hanoi's Propaganda Line in Stockholm: The chief North Vietnamese delegate to the Stockholm conference on Vietnam, Nguyen Thanh Le, used the meetings in an attempt to convince European audiences that the Communist Tet offensive had virtually destroyed the presence of the Saigon government throughout South Vietnam. He took special pains to enhance the status of the Front by stressing its alleged independence of Hanoi.

[redacted] the Hanoi spokesman claimed he had no idea why the Front changed its military tactics and decided to go after the cities in South Vietnam, and that he was not privy to their plans. He also said he was unaware of any Chinese Communist criticism of this military approach.

Le provided the usual Communist optimistic view of the accomplishments of the Tet offensive, using developments in Hue to illustrate his points. He claimed that Saigon's local administrative strength in Hue had been reduced from 3,000 to 150, and that the Communist-sponsored "popular revolutionary committee" was still in existence and functioning there. He was particularly proud of the damage done to the South Vietnamese pacification program, which he described as "ruined." He told his interviewer not to believe the documents which the US claimed to have captured in South Vietnam because many of them were invented by US psychological warfare experts.

Asked if it would not be better to seek negotiations with the Johnson administration now rather than risk having to deal with a more hawkish Republican administration in November, the Hanoi spokesman said that the Communists were confident of winning the military contest in the South and saw no need for negotiations at the present time.



3.3(h)(2)

More Hanoi Observations:

3.3(h)(2)

[redacted] dispersed open storage areas for vehicles and material are used widely to avoid bomb damage. [redacted] fire engines and military vehicles parked under trees in downtown Hanoi, apparently instead of in central garages where they might be easier targets. Vehicle repairs were also being carried out in the open.

3.3(h)(2)

[redacted] saw piles of construction material, fuel, bridge sections, and food grains along roads leading into the city. Each supply area extends no more than 100 yards along the road, and there is an open space of at least the same distance between each area. Four-man air raid shelters were seen at about 20-yard intervals along the same sections of road.

3.3(h)(2)

[redacted] concluded from the external appearance of the main Hanoi thermal power plant that it was completely undamaged and in normal operation.

3.3(h)(2)

[redacted] the city's power supply seemed reasonably normal, but this can be attributed at least in part to the many small generators used throughout Hanoi, as well as to the fact that foreigners get preferential service.

3.3(h)(2)

[redacted] people in Hanoi are becoming noticeably thinner, but [redacted] no signs of large-scale malnutrition or of epidemics. He also concluded that despite privation and loss of efficiency, people's morale was generally high.

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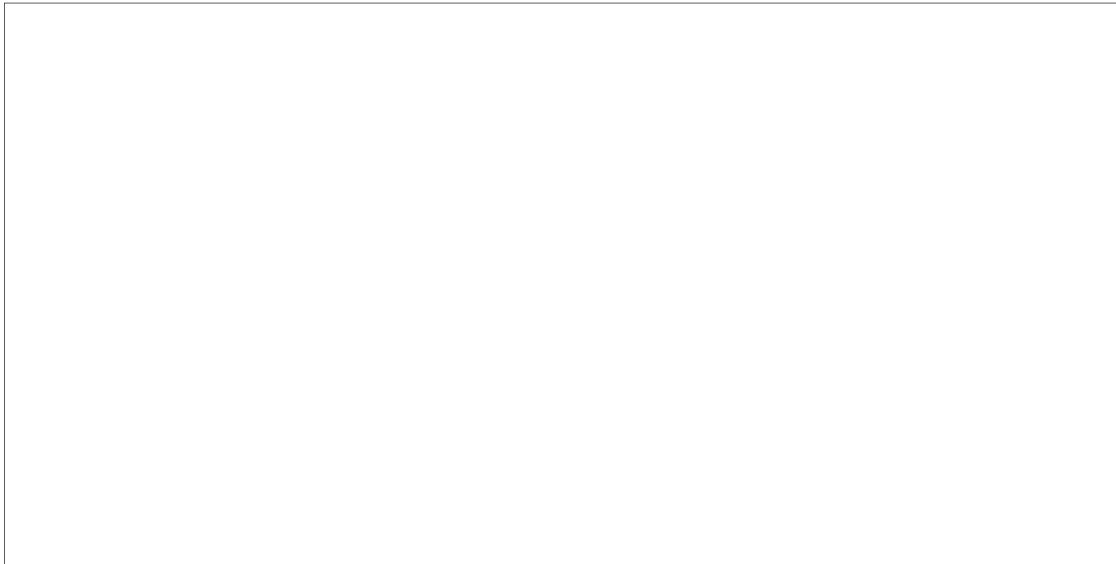
[redacted]

3.3(h)(2)

II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Hanoi Propaganda: Hanoi's international broadcast in English on 26 March featured the Moscow TV appearance of Army deserter James Wright. The broadcast pointed out that Wright formerly served in Vietnam and quoted his comments on the "senseless killing of Vietnamese civilians" and "the aspirations of a small country for independence."

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More on General Westmoreland: Hanoi radio's domestic broadcast on Sunday carried another "analysis" of General Westmoreland's transfer. The theme is that the General's "dismissal" proves the "unavoidable bankruptcy" of US strategy in Vietnam.

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More Hanoi Comment on US: In a broadcast on Monday to South Vietnam, Hanoi radio stated that during the previous four days President Johnson had delivered three speeches "in which he boastfully said that the Americans will win." The broadcast then went on at length quoting contrary opinions from such US magazines as Newsweek, US News and World Report, and the American Daily News.