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THE PROSPECTS FOR NORTH VIETNAM

THE PROBLEM

To analyze the current political, economic, and military situations and to estimate the prospects for North Vietnam over the next year or so.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Although the Communist regime in North Vietnam (DRV) has probably lost a considerable measure of its original popular support and has been faced with sporadic outbursts of violence, it remains in firm control largely because of the loyalty and effectiveness of the army. Moreover, with substantial help from the Bloc, it has apparently made significant progress toward economic restoration, particularly in agriculture. (*Paras. 13-16, 20-21*)
2. The DRV has undertaken to "correct its mistakes" which it admits caused popular resentment, and it will probably be able to regain some of the popular support which it lost. If the party organization is sufficiently strengthened and if crop prospects are good, steps toward further socialization of agriculture may come as soon as the fall or winter of 1957. Local disturbances may recur but for the foreseeable future the DRV will be capable of maintaining effective control. (*Paras. 17, 23-26*)
3. The DRV is generally isolated from the outside world except for close ties with the Bloc, on which it depends for aid and support. However, the DRV has probably been disappointed by the lack of effective Bloc support for its objective of unifying all Vietnam under DRV rule. The DRV, with Bloc logistical support, could easily overrun South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos if opposed only by indigenous forces. However, the Bloc would support such an attack only if Moscow and Peiping were to estimate that such action carried little risk of US military intervention. (*Paras. 29-34*)
4. The DRV will probably continue its tactics of "peaceful competition" with South Vietnam for the support of the Vietnamese, although it will continue its efforts to infiltrate and to subvert official and nonofficial organizations and to exploit dissident and dissatisfied groups in South Vietnam. In Laos, we believe that the DRV will continue to support Pathet Lao efforts to negotiate a political agreement with the Royal Lao Government, with the ultimate objective of Communist control, and may encourage local Pathet Lao military action in order to bring pressure to this end. The DRV will probably not, in the immediate future, play a primary role in Cambodia. (*Paras. 34-36*)

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