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mentation of present guerrilla forces, and then using this situation for political bargaining purposes. The Communists would probably be prepared to accept a prolonged and unresolved struggle, particularly if the country were geographically divided. If non-Asian forces were committed in Laos, the likelihood of an overt Communist invasion would increase.<sup>1</sup> (Para. 21)

6. If the Communists should come to believe that a Western intervention appeared capable of resolving the conflict and establishing firm anti-Communist control over Laos, they would then face the difficult decision of whether to raise the ante further, possibly to the point of openly committing North Vietnamese or Chinese Communist forces to the fighting. We estimate that both Communist China and the USSR wish to avoid serious risk of expanding the hostilities more broadly into the Far East or beyond. We believe, therefore, that the Communists would seek through various uses of diplomacy, propaganda, covert action and guerrilla

<sup>1</sup> The Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State; the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army; the Assistant Chief of Naval Operations for Intelligence, Department of the Navy; and the Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff, would delete this sentence, believing that it oversimplifies the factors which might lead to an overt Communist invasion:

warfare to cause the West to back down. If, however, the Communists became convinced during the course of a series of actions and counteractions that the US intended to commit major US combat forces into Laos, we believe that the odds would be better than even that the Communists would directly intervene in strength with North Vietnamese and possibly Chinese Communist military forces." (Para. 22)

<sup>2</sup> The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF believes that the likelihood of overt intervention by Chinese Communist or North Vietnamese forces would be significantly reduced if the Communists were convinced that the US would not limit its counteroperations in an expanding conflict to the territory of Laos.

<sup>3</sup> The Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State; the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army; and the Assistant Chief of Naval Operations for Intelligence, Department of the Navy, believe that the last sentence of this paragraph overstates somewhat the willingness of North Vietnam and Communist China to use major military force against the US in the Laos situation, and therefore would delete the sentence and substitute the following: "If these measures failed, North Vietnam, and possibly Communist China, might resort to at least a show of military force in a last effort to make these pressures on the West effective, and the risks of overt Communist military intervention would thus increase. In the end, however, the Communists would be unlikely to press such use of force to a point which in their estimation would approach serious risk of large-scale hostilities." The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, would add the following clause: "particularly if they were convinced that the US would not limit its counteroperations in an expanding conflict to the territory of Laos."

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