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several months, the DRV probably cannot expect strong support from the Bloc for the "strict implementation" of the Geneva Agreements. The lack of strong Bloc pressure strengthens international acceptance of the status quo in Vietnam and increases confidence in the future in South Vietnam. Although the DRV may still believe that it could obtain control of all Vietnam through ICC supervised nationwide elections, Vietnamese Communist leaders are probably increasingly doubtful on this point because of their own internal difficulties and the growing nationalist stature of Diem. The DRV probably also believes that its covert assets in South Vietnam will gradually decline if the Diem government is permitted to concentrate on internal security and economic problems free of external harassment.]

65. Despite the declining prospects for the "peaceful" take-over of South Vietnam, we believe that the USSR and Communist China will almost certainly continue unwilling to support open DRV military action against South Vietnam during the period of this estimate. They are probably unwilling to risk the chance of US or SEATO intervention which would make it difficult to limit the conflict to Vietnam, and probably believe that overt DRV military action would seriously undercut the worldwide effort of the Bloc to win friends and supporters. Although the DRV retains the capability to launch an independent military action against South Vietnam, the chances of such action in the absence of assured Bloc support appear to be extremely small.

66. The only remaining course of action holding out some promise for the early achievement of Communist control in South Vietnam appears to be the development of large scale guerrilla warfare in the south. In recent weeks a number of reports from sources of untested reliability have indicated that the Communists may have started preparations in both South Vietnam and in the north to begin guerrilla action. DRV allegations of Vietnamese violations of the demilitarized zone along the 17th parallel and Communist claims of US-Diem plans to violate the Armis-

tice could be propaganda cover for the initiation of guerrilla action against the south.

67. However, the possible indications of armed action appear inconsistent with the DRV's insistence on the continued functioning of the ICC — which is in a position to make at least limited observations of DRV activities. Moreover, guerrilla action in South Vietnam, if it were to be sustained and not to result simply in the identification and gradual elimination of Communist cadres, would require large scale support from the north. This would involve some risk of detection by the ICC and of intervention by the US and possibly SEATO. It would also tend to prejudice current Communist maneuvers elsewhere in Asia. For these reasons, we believe that the DRV will refrain from instituting large scale guerrilla action within South Vietnam during the period of this estimate. Communist capabilities for guerrilla warfare in South Vietnam will exist for some time, however, and the chances of their being employed would probably increase in the event of any substantial deterioration in the domestic situation in South Vietnam — such as might conceivably occur on the death of Diem. The chances of Communist guerrilla warfare would also be increased by deterioration of the international aspects of the situation, such as a withdrawal of the ICC under circumstances which would permit the Communists to place the blame for this event on the GVN.

68. The DRV will continue to seek maximum Bloc support for its objectives and will seek, within the limits of Bloc strategy, to harass and undermine the government in South Vietnam. It will continue to seek direct contacts with South Vietnam, offering economic and cultural exchanges while castigating Diem for "blocking" unification. It will continue efforts to penetrate the government of South Vietnam and to improve its covert organization throughout the area. It may attempt to increase pressures for a reconvening of the Geneva conference and to unsettle the Diem government by fabricating or provoking incidents along the demarcation line and by demonstrations of armed strength within South Vietnam.

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