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year and the largest concentration remains in the Delta region, approximately 300 miles from the 17th parallel. However, clandestine guerrilla operations, including infiltration of small units, could be conducted against South Vietnam and Laos without major troop movements.

23. The Vietnamese Communists have no combat air capabilities at the present time, but some air training probably is underway in Communist China. It is possible that the DRV will have one or two regiments of piston fighters operational in 1957. There are 26 former French air fields in North Vietnam, five of which could be used with little or no development to support sustained operations by Communist jet fighters, and one of which could probably support sustained jet light bomber operations. The DRV has no separate naval organization and coastal defense depends on small armed craft and ground patrols.

DRV External Relations and Policies

24. *Relations with the Bloc.* We believe that the DRV is firmly committed to the policies of the Sino-Soviet Bloc, even to the extent of subordinating or postponing the pursuit of its local or regional objectives in the interest of over-all Bloc tactics and strategy. The attitude of DRV leadership follows from its Communist world outlook and from the fact that DRV objectives can only be realized with Sino-Soviet Bloc support.

25. Despite its close ties with and dependence on Peiping and Moscow, the DRV on occasion acts in less conformity with the Bloc than the European Satellites. A number of considerations account for this special status. The Vietnamese Communists fought their own fight against French colonialism. The DRV possesses an army and security organization which was developed prior to 1950 independently of Sino-Soviet material assistance. The appearance of relative independence created by some DRV actions may, nevertheless, serve to further Bloc interests elsewhere in South-east Asia.

26. Over the past year, Bloc economic and diplomatic support may not have met DRV

expectations. Bloc deliveries of rice have been far below levels necessary to prevent widespread debility in North Vietnam. Mikoyan's visit to Hanoi in April 1956, the first by a major Soviet official, was made a great public occasion and DRV propaganda suggested some expectation that new aid or economic agreements might result. No new Soviet-DRV arrangements were announced, however, and in fact Mikoyan departed without issuance of the usual joint communique. The USSR also failed to press DRV demands either for the "strict implementation" of the Geneva Agreements with respect to north-south consultations and elections, or for reconvening the Geneva conference. The Soviet position, as it developed at the April-May Geneva co-chairmen talks, accepts maintenance of the status quo for the time being. Although the Chinese Communists have been more forthright in supporting the stated DRV position, the Soviet Union has shown no disposition to support the DRV's basic objective of securing control of all Vietnam at the risk of jeopardizing Soviet policy objectives in other areas or the Bloc's campaign of emphasizing "friendship" and reducing tensions.

27. The rather aloof position of the USSR, which increases the dependence of the Vietnamese Communists on Communist China, may be disappointing to the DRV. Some element of the traditional Vietnamese distrust of the Chinese probably survives among Vietnamese Communist leaders, despite the bond of Marxism, and the DRV may well wish that it could counter Chinese influence with closer Soviet ties.

28. Substantial differences over policy toward South Vietnam, and possibly Laos, may develop between the DRV and the USSR and Communist China if prospects for an early extension of Communist control to South Vietnam continue to decline. Even in this event, however, and despite the DRV's potential capacity for independent action, we believe that other considerations would prevail to cause the DRV to continue its loyal adherence to the Bloc.

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