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SOUTHEAST ASIA

3. Viet Minh prepares for mass anti-American demonstration:

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A large demonstration occurred in Hanoi on 27 December which was apparently the dress rehearsal for a mass protest against "American imperialism" probably scheduled for 1 January. The American consul reports that the participants, numbering several thousand, appeared apathetic and did not react to the sight of the American flag displayed on his automobile.

Comment: The Viet Minh has recently intensified its anti-American campaign. Children's publications have encouraged their readers to "hate American aggressors." A Hanoi newspaper reported on 25 December that more than

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20,000 people in Hanoi suburbs had participated in 75 meetings to protest "American imperialism."

A large-scale "spontaneous" demonstration in the new "Red Square" in Hanoi would be the regime's most vigorous expression of its anti-American campaign thus far, and would serve the additional purpose of impressing the citizens of Hanoi with the degree of popular support the Viet Minh can muster.

4. Viet Minh foreign minister voices lack of confidence in "the East":

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Viet Minh foreign minister Phan Van Dong told [redacted] that while he did not understand India's ties with the West, neither did he have "entire confidence in the East."

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In relating this conversation to the American consul in Hanoi, [redacted] contrasted Dong's "sensible" attitude with Ho Chi Minh's complete devotion to Communism. He also described the interest of Viet Minh officials in Western culture and institutions, as evidenced by their requests for reading matter on these subjects.

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Comment: Dong is a member of a cultured "mandarin" family and participated in Vietnamese nationalist activity in the pre-Communist period of the twenties. He was one of the first Vietnamese to become a Communist, and has been a close collaborator of Ho Chi Minh for three decades. He is the Viet Minh's most skillful diplomatist, and as such is capable of striking a convincing "national Communist" posture.

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SOUTH ASIA

5. India accepts "in principle" Soviet steel plant offer:

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[redacted] India has accepted "in principle" a Soviet offer to set up a steel plant with a 1,000,000-ton annual capacity, according to a Reuters report. Indian officials will meet Soviet experts this week to negotiate an agreement, but final agreement on all points is likely to take some time.

Comment: Since Indian officials have said that India will seek at least to quadruple its present steel production of about 1,000,000 tons a year, acceptance "in principle" of the Soviet offer does not close the door on other projects to expand production by utilizing British or American resources.

[redacted] New Delhi is increasingly reluctant to approve large-scale projects originated by private enterprise.

The Soviet negotiators have consistently avoided detailed discussion of technical points, but will have to give Indian experts satisfaction on these points if follow-up negotiations are to succeed. [redacted] the Soviet plant would have an annual capacity of only 300,000 tons and would not make as many types of steel products as the Indians desired. [redacted]

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