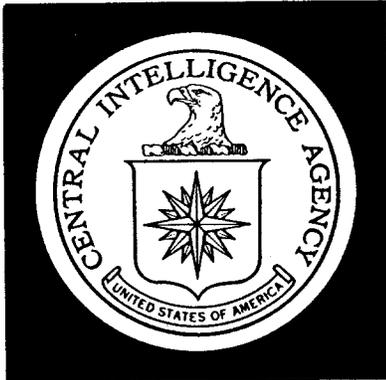


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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence Memorandum

*Expansion of North Vietnam's
International Radiobroadcasting Effort*

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June 1969

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
June 1969

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Expansion of North Vietnam's
International Radiobroadcasting Effort

Summary

Since early 1968, international radiobroadcasts controlled by Hanoi have climbed from nearly 300 hours per week to more than 500 hours. Radio Hanoi and Radio Liberation (the clandestine voice of the Viet Cong) have accounted for most of this expansion, with smaller increases in the clandestine broadcasts known as Radio Pathet Lao and Radio of the Patriotic Neutralist Forces (Laos).

The primary target audiences for Hanoi's official and clandestine international broadcasting are the indigenous populations of South Vietnam and Laos. Allied forces in South Vietnam also have begun to receive substantially increased attention, and since the beginning of the Paris talks, Hanoi has initiated radiobroadcasting to the European area. Transmissions to Europe now amount to almost 40 hours per week.

The clandestine broadcasts of Radio Liberation, Radio Pathet Lao, and Neutralist Forces Radio are not independent operations originating from South Vietnam and Laos, as represented by North Vietnam and other Communist countries. From all indications, these clandestine broadcasting operations are tightly controlled by North Vietnam and probably are carried out from the Radio Hanoi transmitting complex located at Me Tri.

North Vietnam has achieved this rapid expansion in international programming by importing seven new

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transmitters -- bringing to at least 18 the number of transmitters in international service -- and by making more intensive use of existing facilities. Hanoi is procuring more broadcasting equipment from both Communist and Free World countries, and it can be expected that the North Vietnamese radio propaganda effort will be further stepped up.

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North Vietnam's Radio Propaganda Apparatus

1. North Vietnam's international radio propaganda apparatus is tightly controlled by both the Lao Dong (Communist) Party and the government. To reach its target audiences, located primarily in Indochina, Hanoi has developed a coordinated schedule of both overt and clandestine broadcasting. At the policy level, guidance and control over the international broadcasting effort is exercised in tandem by the Propaganda and Training Department of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee and by the General Directorate of Information, attached directly to the Office of the Premier. Provision of facilities, equipment, and technical personnel is the responsibility of the Directorate of Broadcasting, a subordinate arm of the Ministry of Communications.

2. For day-to-day operations, the focal organizations are the Vietnam News Agency (VNA) and Radio Hanoi, as shown in Figure 1. The VNA provides Radio Hanoi with the information used in daily international broadcasts and utilizes Radio Hanoi's facilities to broadcast its international radio-teletype news service.*

3. There is strong evidence that in addition to its own official radiobroadcasting effort North Vietnam exerts direct control clandestinely over the radio propaganda activities of the Viet Cong (the so-called National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam, or NFLSV) and the indigenous Communist forces in Laos -- both the Pathet Lao and the less important dissident Neutralist Forces. The VNA in Hanoi maintains direct radio communications with the Liberation News Agency of the NFLSV in South Vietnam and with the Pathet Lao News Agency in Laos. There also is evidence that the dissident Neutralist Forces in Laos use the Pathet Lao radio communications facility to stay in contact with Hanoi.

4. From all current indications, the clandestine stations share with Radio Hanoi the use of the transmitter complex at Me Tri, just outside Hanoi,

* *In addition to their international radio propaganda activities, VNA and Radio Hanoi are also responsible for domestic radiobroadcasting.*

although their broadcasts are represented by North Vietnam and other Communist countries as independent operations carried out from South Vietnam by the NFLSV's Radio Liberation and from Laos by Radio Pathet Lao and Radio of the Patriotic Neutralist Forces. Daily international radio-teletype services operated by the Liberation News Agency and the Pathet Lao News Agency also are broadcast clandestinely over the Me Tri facilities.

Broadcasting Buildup

5. North Vietnam has substantially increased its volume of international broadcasting -- both official and clandestine -- since early 1968. The total volume of programming rose from 294 hours per week in February 1968 to 508 hours per week by May 1969, with most of the increase directed at audiences in South Vietnam and Laos (see Figure 2).^{*} Within this period, the number of broadcast hours targeted at South Vietnamese audiences alone jumped from 94 hours to about 168 hours per week, an increase of nearly 80 percent.

6. Overt international broadcasting by Radio Hanoi climbed from 152 hours to 270 hours weekly. This was sufficient to raise North Vietnam from eleventh to eighth place among Communist countries in the volume of official international broadcasting. Radio Hanoi's international broadcasts are directed mainly at South Vietnamese and Montagnard audiences, but an increased amount of broadcast time has also been allocated to Allied forces in South Vietnam, to Thailand, and to Cambodia. Until 1968, North Vietnam beamed no broadcasts to Europe. Since the beginning of the Paris talks, however, Radio Hanoi has developed a schedule of voice news broadcasts to Europe that currently consists of 21 hours a week in English, French, and Vietnamese. These broadcasts are nominally directed to VNA offices in Paris and Moscow but can be heard by anyone tuned to the right shortwave frequencies.

7. Liberation Radio's international programming has more than doubled since early 1968, increasing

^{*} *In contrast, the volume of domestic broadcasting by central radio stations in Saigon and Vientiane has remained relatively static since 1966.*

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from about 53 to 125 hours per week. As the voice of the Viet Cong, its broadcasts are targeted primarily at the South Vietnamese population, but it does carry some programs in Cambodian, Mandarin, French, and English. Like Radio Hanoi, Radio Liberation began in 1968 to broadcast to Europe and has recently increased its programming to this area from 14 to 17.5 hours per week.

8. Radio Pathet Lao has increased its programming output by about 30 percent to almost 80 hours per week since early 1968, with all of its broadcasts aimed at Laotian audiences. About 55 percent of Radio Pathet Lao's weekly broadcast hours are in the Lao language, with the remainder allocated to programs in minority languages such as Lao Theung, Lao Soung, La Ve, and French.

9. Radio of the Patriotic Neutralist Forces showed a relatively modest increase of more than 20 percent -- from about 29 to about 36 hours per week -- between early 1968 and early 1969. This broadcast operation evidently was originally organized and sustained by North Vietnam for the purpose of winning over moderate neutralist sentiment in Laos to the Communist side. Coincident with the beginning of a North Vietnamese military offensive in Laos, however, Neutralist Forces Radio went off the air abruptly on 6 February 1969 and remained silent for almost three months. Since resumption of operations late in April, Radio of the Patriotic Neutralist Forces has abandoned its relatively moderate propaganda line and now is virtually indistinguishable from Radio Pathet Lao.

Transmitting Facilities

10. The Me Tri radiobroadcasting complex, located about four miles southwest of Hanoi, houses the only known international radiobroadcast transmitters in North Vietnam. The main transmitter building at Me Tri is connected by cable to the control area of the Hanoi International Radio Transmission Station at Dai Mo, which is North Vietnam's principal international point-to-point communications facility and is located about two miles southwest of Me Tri. It is probable that Dai Mo is the facility used by the VNA in maintaining its out-of-country radio communications

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with Liberation News Agency and Pathet Lao News Agency headquarters. Another cable and a wireline lead northwest from the Me Tri control building toward the Hanoi Citadel. These landlines are probably used to link studio facilities and government authorities in central Hanoi with the two transmitting stations.

11. The number of transmitters used by Radio Hanoi for overt international broadcasting evidently increased in 1968 from three to 13, all but one operating in the shortwave band. Of the ten transmitters added to Radio Hanoi's schedule, one probably was transferred from the domestic service, two apparently were reassigned from Radio Liberation broadcasting, and the remaining seven were newly procured from foreign suppliers (four from Communist China and three of unknown origin). At least five other transmitters are assigned to the clandestine broadcasting effort, and it is also possible that Radio Hanoi allocates some program time on its own transmitters to clandestine broadcasting.

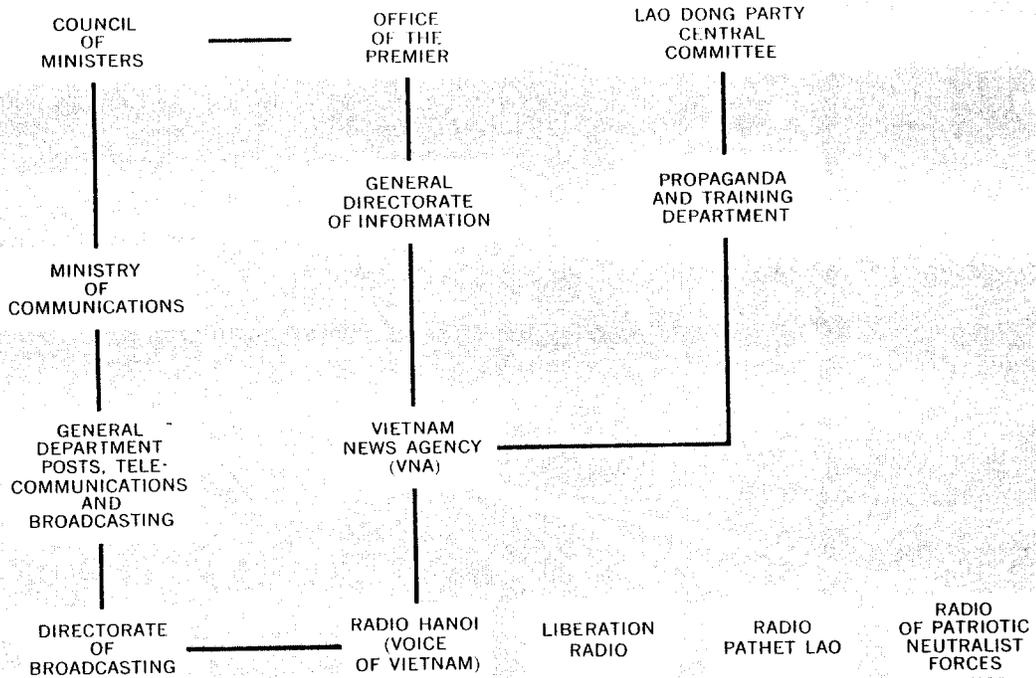
Outlook

12. North Vietnam can be expected to continue expanding its international radiobroadcasting effort in terms of both total broadcasting hours and geographic coverage. A new 20-kilowatt short-wave broadcast transmitter -- ordered from Japan in late 1968 -- probably will go into operation before the end of 1969, and North Vietnam has concluded contracts with other Communist and Free World countries for an unknown quantity of additional broadcast equipment. Hanoi also may choose to expand its broadcasting output by using existing transmitters more intensively. South Vietnam and Laos will remain the primary targets for radio propaganda out of Hanoi, but broadcasting to other parts of southeast Asia and to the European area -- including the Communist countries -- probably will share in any increase in the broadcasting effort.

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Figure 1

Organization of North Vietnam's Radio Broadcasting Effort



LIBERATION
NEWS AGENCY
-NFLSV-

PATHET LAO
FORCES
-NLHX-

DISSIDENT
NEUTRALIST
FORCES

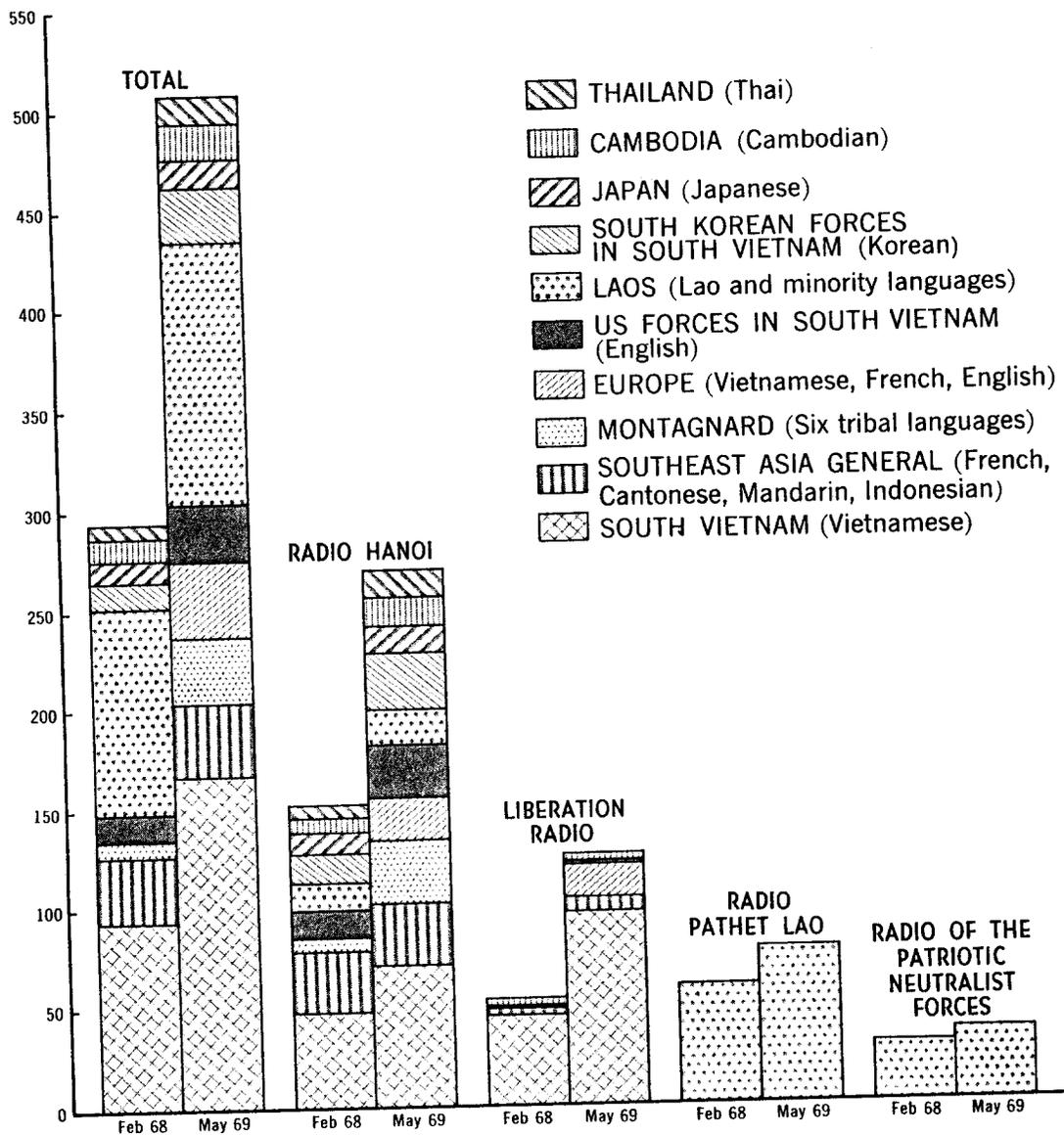
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Figure 2

Expansion of North Vietnamese International Radio Propaganda by Target Area in Weekly Hours *February 1968 and May 1969*



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