

~~SECRET~~

5-3838

5398

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE AS SANITIZED
1999

S-3838
13 October 1971

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Soviet Military Aid to North Vietnam

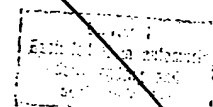
1. During 1965-70 the USSR provided an estimated \$1.5 billion in military aid to North Vietnam, about three-quarters of total deliveries from Communist countries. Soviet deliveries rose rapidly during the first three years of the war to a peak of about _____ in 1967. Thereafter, deliveries from the USSR declined

Estimated Communist Military Deliveries
to North Vietnam

	Million US \$						
	<u>1965</u>	<u>1966</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>Total</u>
USSR							1,555
Communist China							590
Eastern Europe							5 a/
Total							2,150 b/

- a. The cumulative value of deliveries from Eastern Europe during 1965-70 is estimated at \$5 million.
- b. Negligible amounts of military aid have also been received from North Korea, Cuba, and Mongolia since 1966.

~~SECRET~~



2. The rise and fall in the military aid provided by the USSR is explained by North Vietnam's changing requirements for military equipment. During 1965-68, North Vietnam constructed an extensive air defense system composed of 25 to 30 surface-to-air missile battalions, hundreds of surface-to-air sites and thousands of anti-aircraft guns. This system and its operation were made possible largely by deliveries of air defense equipment, missiles and AAA ammunition from the USSR. Deliveries for the build-up of North Vietnam's air defense system account for more than 85% of Soviet military aid during the past five years

the overall military aid delivery picture is presented in the attached table. Following the bombing halt over North Vietnam, Soviet deliveries of air defense equipment and related munitions dropped sharply.

Estimated Soviet Air Defense Aid
to North Vietnam

	Million US \$						
	<u>1965</u>	<u>1966</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>Total</u>
Total							1,364
AAA ammunition							666
SAM missiles							202
Air defense equipment							496

3. There is no evidence that political considerations, as opposed to Hanoi's reduced needs, explain the decline in military aid deliveries by the USSR in the last two years. Moscow's continuing willingness to supply North Vietnam with military aid was reaffirmed by Soviet President Podgorny during the course of his recent visit to Hanoi. However,

~~SECRET~~

even if the USSR were to restrict deliveries in an effort to influence Hanoi's conduct of the war, its leverage would be severely limited. North Vietnam's essential requirement for continuing the war in the south consists largely of ground forces equipment, ammunition and trucks. If the Communist Chinese were to take on the entire task of providing this aid, the burden would not be unmanageable.

There are a few items which Communist China would have difficulty providing, such as MIG-21 aircraft and SA-2 missiles, but these are not presently essential to the conduct of the war.

4. The most probable outlook for the next several years is that Communist military aid deliveries to North Vietnam will remain at or near the 1970 level, assuming no major change in the scale of fighting on the ground and that the bombing of North Vietnam will not be resumed. Deliveries in 1971 may be slightly higher than in 1970 to offset losses incurred during Lam Son 719. The USSR evidently has been delivering tanks to replace some or all of the large number of tanks lost by North Vietnam during the campaign.

CIA/OER

- 3 -

~~SECRET~~