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Monday, August 28, 1967

EO 12958 3.4(b)(1)-25Yrs  
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TEXT OF CIA REPORT [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] CIA comments that in view of the fact that [REDACTED] has been known in the past to embroider information for his own and his Government's purposes and the additional possibility that North Vietnamese officials are feeding him information for their own purposes, it is difficult to separate fact from speculation or misinformation in the report.

Begin text:

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The group of officials in the North Vietnamese regime who have generally tended to take a more open-minded position toward the possibility of negotiations with the American Government to end the Vietnam War recognized in mid-August 1967 that chances for early peace talks were very slim. The North Vietnamese Ambassador to Indonesia, Pham Binh, who has been of this clique, sent word to Suharto's [REDACTED] for secret talks on the Vietnam problem, [REDACTED] that his (Binh's) optimism before departing for consultations at Hanoi in July 1967, had proven unjustified; before leaving Djakarta, Binh had told [REDACTED] he was hopeful that talks might occur in August or September 1967.

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An Indonesian Embassy Official in Hanoi relayed to [REDACTED] the explanation that Pham Van Dong, chief figure in the so-called moderate clique, firmly believes that the war is going

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so badly for the North Vietnamese that if it is not ended in a matter of months, North Vietnam would need massive Chinese intervention to prevent total collapse within eighteen months. Pham Van Dong and his sympathizers fear entry of Chinese combat troops almost as much as they do American troops; they have been concerned that only North Vietnam is suffering from further prosecution of the war; they believe North Vietnam's negotiating position will deteriorate further as America has stepped up its military pressure; outside help from Russia and China to North Vietnam is sorely limited and North Vietnamese civilian and military manpower is sorely pressed. Therefore, Dong's view was that the sooner negotiations could commence and relieve the military pressures on Hanoi the better for the North Vietnamese. This was a difference of viewpoint from Ho, however, not an open break. Dong has bowed to Ho Chi Minh's insistence that the war effort be continued.

Ho, who is as fully in control of the Hanoi regime as ever, agrees with Dong that the war is going badly and costing North Vietnam heavily at present. He sees the winter months, however, as a chance to improve the military position in the South somewhat, to increase supplies to Viet Cong elements in South Vietnam, and then to make a bid for peace talks from a greater position of strength shortly after the new year. He is confident that the North Vietnamese situation will improve over the next few months to permit this.

One factor influencing Ho is the change in the Soviet attitude. The Russians, who were earlier suspected by Ho Chi Minh of wobbling in their support of a militant Hanoi position, have now strongly urged Ho not to negotiate at least until early next year. They have promised Ho an additional two hundred million U.S. dollars worth of military and economic aid for Calendar Year 1968 if Ho fights on; if he does not, they threatened to cut off the aid. Their position is now almost as militant as that of Peking. The Soviets, however, have stated that they wish to have Ho continue fighting until early 1968 and then they will reassess the situation.

This conforms with Ho's own views, and the Pham Van Dong moderates also recognize that post-election political

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instability could occur in South Vietnam and that increased Soviet aid would help the war effort greatly. They are skeptical whether either factor or both would offset increased American military strength and North Vietnamese declining resources. Ho's decision, however, stands, and both he and Pham Van Dong are relieved that there will be less necessity to rely exclusively on Communist China. Ho's Chinese top advisors, of whom five out of seventeen have been killed during recent war action and bombings, advocate indefinite continuation of the war. So does the pro-Chinese element in the North Vietnamese politburo, who would agree to negotiations only as a ruse to gain time for a renewed war effort.

(Source Comment: The Soviet reasons for wanting the war to continue until early 1968 are obscure unless they plan another military diversion in some other part of the world and want many American troops pinned down until then. The best way to increase the influence of the Pham Van Dong "peace-minded" clique and to convince them to strengthen their arguments with Ho in favor of negotiations is for the Americans to increase the pressure on Hanoi and prove that Ho is wrong in expecting military improvement before early next year.)

(CIA Comment: [REDACTED] has maintained frequent contact in Djakarta with Pham Binh and has been at least indirectly in touch with Pham Van Dong and other North Vietnamese officials over a period of several months. His description of Pham Van Dong as a relatively peace-minded North Vietnamese leader and of existence of a "moderate" clique may be overdrawn but probably not consciously on [REDACTED] part. He himself is fairly hawkish on Vietnam especially for an Indonesian, and it is more likely that Pham Binh and Pham Van Dong have consciously exaggerated their possible slight differences in view with Ho to impress the Indonesians. [REDACTED] was adamant, however, in insisting that the information on increased Soviet aid to Hanoi came from North Vietnamese officials themselves, whatever their motives for so advising him.

It is extremely doubtful that North Vietnamese officials would discuss with any foreigners the extent of disagreement

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within the policy-making group at the top of the regime; it is equally improbable that they would reveal Soviet attitudes and conditions in granting aid or give precise information on the amount of aid. On the other hand, it is possible they have [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] determined to continue the war and that the Soviets have agreed to support them with additional aid. Other information on the status of Soviet/North Vietnamese aid negotiations indicate, however, that the aid agreements for the first six months of 1968 is still being negotiated and has not yet been signed. [REDACTED]

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