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SNIE 10-6/1-65
TS 185859
4 June 1965

SPECIAL NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

PROBABLE REACTIONS TO CERTAIN
US COURSES OF ACTION

This is the estimate. No further versions will be published.

Submitted by the
DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

Concurred in by the
UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

As indicated overleaf
4 June 1965

APPROVED FOR RELEASE

AUGUST 1994

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The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate: The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Defense, AEC and NSA.

Concurred in by the
UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

on 4 June 1965. Concurring were the Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State; the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency; the Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the USIB; and the Director of the National Security Agency. The Assistant to the Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of his jurisdiction.

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TS#185859

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

4 June 1965

SUBJECT: SNIE 10-6/1-65: PROBABLE REACTIONS TO CERTAIN US COURSES OF ACTION

THE PROBLEM

To estimate Communist and Free World reactions to SAC heavy bomber strikes on enemy positions in South Vietnam.

THE ESTIMATE

1. A SAC heavy bomber strike on enemy positions in South Vietnam which occurred after a SAC raid on airfields in the Hanoi-Haiphong area of North Vietnam would produce relatively little additional hostile reaction from Hanoi, Peiping, or Moscow over and above that already produced by the strike on these sensitive North Vietnamese targets,* though there would almost certainly be

* The consequences of such an attack are dealt with in SNIE 10-6-65, "Probable Communist Reactions to Certain US Actions," dated 2 June 1965, TOP SECRET, SENSITIVE.

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some supplementary propaganda outcry over this fresh evidence of "imperialist aggression."

2. If such a SAC strike on targets within South Vietnam occurred before SAC had been employed against targets north of the 17th Parallel, the reaction would be a little different. US aircraft (both land and carrier based) are already conducting intensive bombing missions within South Vietnam, however, so the new ingredient would not be the nature of the target or the severity of the bombardment but, simply, the fact of SAC's participation.

3. The SAC flight from base to target (and any concomitant increase in SAC's worldwide readiness posture) would probably produce some short-term heightening of tension the nature and impact of which would depend in large measure on how soon the Communists picked up evidence of SAC's mission and how Peiping and, especially, Moscow read overall US intentions. After the raid, there would probably be increased apprehension in Peiping, Hanoi, and especially Moscow that this use of US strategic forces foreshadowed the use of SAC over North Vietnam and a general heightening of tensions, including for example, new deployments of long-range nuclear-capable forces. Such apprehension would be shared in a number of Free World capitals (notably Paris, London, Rome, and Tokyo) where some adverse reaction

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would almost certainly be registered -- both on military and on political grounds -- to this use of SAC. Foreign press comment would be extensive and generally hostile.

4. The raid itself, whether it occurred before or after a SAC strike in North Vietnam, might temporarily disrupt VC tactical plans but would probably have no substantial effect on their military strategy or timing. It might, however, heighten the urgency of Hanoi's requests to Peiping and Moscow for air defense support. Such a raid would almost certainly prompt new Communist warnings and would probably impel some Western countries (e.g., France and perhaps the UK) to step up diplomatic activity designed to promote early negotiations.

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