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SNIE 10-4-65
19 March 1965

SPECIAL NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

PROBABLE COMMUNIST REACTIONS
TO DEPLOYMENT OF AN ROK COMBAT DIVISION
FOR BASE SECURITY DUTY IN SOUTH VIETNAM

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
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Submitted by the
DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

Concurred in by the
UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

As indicated overleaf
19 March 1965

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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, and NSA.

Concurred in by the
UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

on 19 March 1965. Concurring were the Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State; the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency; and the Director of the National Security Agency. The Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the USIB and the Assistant to the Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

19 March 1965

SUBJECT: SNIE 10-4-65: PROBABLE COMMUNIST REACTIONS TO DEPLOYMENT OF A ROK
COMBAT DIVISION FOR BASE SECURITY DUTY IN SOUTH VIETNAM

THE ESTIMATE

1. We do not believe that the introduction of one ROK combat division into South Vietnam for static defense purposes would provoke Communist China, North Korea, or North Vietnam overtly to invade South Korea or South Vietnam. Neither do we believe that it would in itself change Communist attitudes toward negotiations, or lead to a slackening of the insurrection in South Vietnam.

2. The main question is what interpretation the Communists would put on the introduction of the full ROK combat division. They would almost certainly estimate that it would not in itself significantly alter the military situation. They might consider, however, that it portended a substantial further buildup of foreign forces -- e.g., Chinese Nationalist, Thai, Philippine, and US -- for ground combat. Whatever their estimate on this point, they would try to discourage such a buildup. To this end they would increase their propaganda, and again accuse the US of recklessly

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expanding the war. They would probably employ the theme of "US use of Asians to fight Asians" and attempt to stir up troubles between the ROK forces and the Vietnamese.

3. The Communists would probably supplement their propaganda with some sorts of action. The North Koreans would almost certainly attempt to arouse protests in South Korea against the export of South Korean forces. They might make threatening military movements within North Korea or along the DMZ, designed to reinforce any doubts the South Korean or other governments might have about the wisdom of thus diverting their troops. We think it unlikely that North Korean ground force "volunteers" would be sent to North Vietnam, though it is possible that North Korean technicians or anti-aircraft personnel (possibly SAM operators) might be brought in. In South Vietnam, Viet Cong terrorist efforts and military harassment might be directed against the ROK forces in the hope that casualties would cause discontent in South Korea and also serve as a warning to other potential foreign contingents.

4. Communist China might attempt to scare off further US-initiated strengthening moves in South Vietnam by deploying Chinese forces southward toward the North Vietnam border. We do not believe, however, that China would do much else. It would be unlikely to counter by sending a Chinese division to the DRV because it would be unneeded there and

probably uninvited. If it had decided for independent reasons, to send more or less overt anti-aircraft or fighter plane units, it might seize upon the introduction of the ROK division in the South as further justification for doing so.

5. The introduction of a ROK division would add one more complication to an already difficult situation for Moscow. It would provide a new occasion for the DRV to put pressure on the USSR for more and quicker military aid. The USSR might agree to North Vietnamese requests for greater or speedier assistance, although we doubt that this would take forms which substantially increased the risks of direct Soviet involvement. It would also diminish somewhat any USSR hopes that negotiations could still be arranged.