

# Hanoi Set for Long War

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SAIGON.

The Communist regime in Hanoi is preparing for a long, hard war against the South Vietnamese and American troops.

Political specialists studying the North Viet Nam regime and visitors from the capital have made this judgment. The experts have reported to the free world capitals, including Washington, that hopes of any kind of negotiations with Hanoi are virtually non-existent.

The North Vietnamese regime remains firm in this decision and is planning for the possible evacuation of Hanoi, according to reliable sources. Members of the International Control Commission (India, Canada, Poland) have been warned that when ordered they must be prepared to evacuate Hanoi.

They have been told that preparations for them to live and function outside the capital city already have been made, but they have not been told of the new locations.

## SHIFT

Months ago the Hanoi radio announced that the seat of the North Vietnamese government might be moved to Hoa Binh, a province 45 miles west of Hanoi in the mountainous highlands. The announcement was interpreted in Saigon as being a "decoy."

Some sources estimate 25 to 50 per cent of the staffs, files and equipment of the municipal offices of Hanoi already have been evacuated. But the central government still appears to be operating from Hanoi.

These sources said if the Communist military effort in the South crumbled, the North would have no alternative but to pull back and wait for several years.

"Maybe the Hanoi regime is over-estimating its strength in the South—but so far that disillusionment has not come and that's what keeps them going," one reliable source explained.

"The best way to bring this disillusionment is to defeat the Communists in the South. But, so far, the stress in Hanoi is on a long, drawn-out war," the source added.

These sources believe that, contrary to recent press reports from Washington, there is no evidence the North Viet-

namese leadership is split in its decision to continue the war in South Viet Nam.

These sources said any previous differences between pro-Moscow and pro-Peking factions in Hanoi seem to have been overcome and that the leadership was united.

They said the confidence of the North Vietnamese regime in ultimate victory is based on two factors: encouragement by anti-Vietnamese demonstrations in America and other parts of the world, and reliance on the ability of Communist troops and anti-government agents in South Viet Nam to match the American military build-up.

"While Hanoi is getting claustrophobia," another source said, "the morale of the North Vietnamese, especially the youth, appears to be good. It will take something more than creeping bombing around the capital to shake it. The North Vietnamese say, 'The more the Americans keep coming, dig deeper the grave'—it is said with a sort of swing to it. The Hanoi regime thinks it is doing wonderfully well in the South and claims to have wiped out many American battalions.

"And when there are stories of anti-Viet Nam demonstrations and troubles in America the regime says the great American people are gaining solidarity against the American government. They made a big fuss about the self-burn-

ings in front of the Pentagon and the United Nations."

The city of Hanoi is pictured as bleak and desolate, but still far from starvation. Hanoi officials claim there was a good rice crop this year and so far rice and vegetables have kept coming into Hanoi from the surrounding countryside. The Chinese Communists are also believed to be sending rice flour into North Viet Nam.

Sources here say the American bombings are thought to have affected either the production or the distribution of textile goods from Nam Dinh throughout the country, since the cloth ration, which had always been low, has again been reduced.

"In the free world a similar siege would be inflationary, but not in Hanoi," one source explained. "There is no fluctuation of prices because of the strict rationing. But there's nothing except rice and vegetables to buy."

There has been a noticeable increase in three-ton Soviet trucks on the streets of Hanoi, the source noted, but no increase in bicycles, buses or official cars.

"The Hanoi regime is doing everything it can to maintain a militant spirit among the people," one source explained. "There are plenty of trenches and occasional air

alerts for the soldiers, but not for the people.

"You see billboards on the street corners showing American planes shot down. Once in a while the newspapers carry photographs of American pilots. On Sundays, you can see office workers reinforcing the river banks, digging more shelters or underground gasoline dumps.

"You see all sorts of military posters and some of the troops bicycle through town. The regime is more organized and the people are more controlled now. The feeling seems to be if they stop fighting now, the Americans will take over."

Other sources said the evacuation of persons from the Hanoi area has stopped; in fact, some of the school children have again returned to Hanoi.

"This evacuation business is finished," one source explained. "No one talks about it anymore—there's no place to go."

The North Vietnamese government has offered to build bomb shelters for foreign embassy staffs and members of the International Control Commission at a cost of \$4,000, one source reported and added:

"They aren't worth that much money—they aren't substantial enough to save anyone—but the foreigners had one built anyway."