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ho chi minh--rewrite--1

april 9, 1965

SAIGON--The Hanoi regime and the Communist-Led Liberation Front within South Vietnam have unequivocally, irreversibly rejected any overtures to negotiate a peaceful settlement for the war in this southern republic.

Specialists ~~are~~ here who watch Hanoi and Liberation Front affairs believe "there's not the slightest hint or hope that Hanoi or the Liberation Front will negotiate on any terms."

These specialists believe that instead of negotiations ~~Hanoi~~ Peking, Hanoi and the Liberation Front (the political backbone of the Viet Cong guerrillas) will drive for the complete defeat and total humiliation of the American political and military posture in Vietnam, in other parts of Asia and Africa, and will prove the Communist invincibility in guerrilla-revolutionary warfare.

Reliable observers predict that unless there is a drastic change in the political climate within South Vietnam--which has been sliding into pro-neutralist hands--the Communists will accomplish their mission in 3 years.

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These observers believe that at the end of three years--when the Communist subversives have wrecked the armed forces, the government machinery and have virtual control over the countryside and smaller towns--then they will "negotiate", but the political settlement would amount of the virtual surrender of the American position.

The final bit of evidence which the Hanoi-ologists needed to form their conclusive judgement came only hours before the speech of President Lyndon B. Johnson was received by radio in Saigon. That evidence came in the ~~re-shuffle~~ announcements of the government reshuffle in Hanoi.

These specialists viewed the government reshuffle as the ascendancy of the influence of Truong ~~China~~^{Chinh}, Chinh, who represents the most extremist proponent of the pro-Peking wing of the Communist Party apparatus in North Vietnam.

(Note to Editor: I shall cable you a paragraph to insert here on what changes were made, and the relationship of the new ministers to Truong Chinh. A ~~friend~~ Vietnamese friend served under Truong Chinh during the Indo-China War and we'll try to get some fresh material for a profile of him ^{for} ~~to be included in~~ a separate article.)

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The first inklings of the refusal to negotiate came on March 22 when, in a major policy address, Nguyen Huu Thom, a lawyer who is chairman of the National Liberation Front within South Vietnam, took the hardest, most anti-American line yet propaganda-ized. He ordered the Viet Cong guerrillas and terrorists to "strike at the head of the Americans"--and eight days later they did by bombing the American Embassy in Saigon, which is the symbol of the total American position and of Ambassador Maxwell Taylor's "forward strategy" of bombing North Vietnam. The speech by H. Tho was during the following days backed up by the same line from Hanoi, Peking, North Korea and the Communist Party in Japan,--and most significantly, by the *Cheong Ching* Pathet Lao radio in Laos.

Within the past two weeks, both Hanoi radio and the Liberation Front radio began making a significant change in ~~their~~ expressing their future objectives. The radio broadcasts consistently vowed "to ~~de~~ liberate the South, to defend the North and to work for the re-unification of the North and South". Their previous position had been to work for a "neutral" South Vietnam--which ~~ever~~ American officials interpreted to mean would eventually, perhaps in a decade, become re-unified with North Vietnam. Now, Hanoi and the Liberation Front have apparently "burned a phase"--as an ex-Vietnamese Communist explained--meaning that that have skipped the ~~that~~ *Pushing* "neutral" phase and are ~~jumping~~ immediately for re-unification.

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This is interpreted to be diametrically opposed to President Lyndon Johnson's demand that South Vietnam remain an "independent" entity, separated from North Viet Nam.

The most immediate question in ~~South~~ ^{North} Saigon is whether or not the Russians will send air defense material to ~~surround~~ ^{protect} the Hanoi ~~regime~~ ^{Vietnam} from American air strikes. Most observers here believe the threat of a n invasion of Communist Chinese troops has ~~virtually~~ ^{diminished} ~~disappeared~~ ^{disappeared}.

However, most observers and intelligence experts here ~~in~~ view the Russian ~~reaction~~ ^{reaction} ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ Berlin and ~~Germany~~ ^{Germany} as a direct reaction to the American airstrikes on North Vietnam. One school of thought believes that since the Russians have "opened a second front in Europe" the possibility of their sending in missiles and jets to Hanoi has ~~virtually~~ ^{diminished} ~~disappeared~~ ^{diminished}--but not disappeared. ^{Open fronts} Another school believes that the Russians will ~~push~~ ^{push} in both Europe and in Asia.

According to reliable sources, the ~~dilemma~~ ^{dilemma} Russian offer to ~~send~~ ^{send} a ir defense material to Hanoi contained the condition that the Hanoi regime would negotiate a peaceful settlement--rather than to continue ~~the~~ ^{the} or accelerate the war in the South.

Observers here believe the Hanoi regime ~~flatly~~ ^{flatly} snubbed the Russian proposal.

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Now the question is whether or not Hanoi can persuade the Russians to shift to the Hanoi position--and still receive their air defense missiles without the Russian--and apparently American--condition to negotiate a settlement.

For, specialists in Hanoi affairs, believe said that despite the upsurge of the pro-Peking strength within the leadership of the Communist Party in Hanoi, the Communists in Hanoi will still maintain friendly relations with the Russians, will not have an open break with Moscow--and will, in fact, attempt to pull the Russians closer to the Hanoi-Peking axis.

The North Vietnamese Ambassador in Moscow, Nguyen Luong Bang--known as "Red Star"--is one of the most important Communist Party members of the Hanoi regime. President Ho Chi Minh of North Vietnam is the most senior, prestigious member of the world Communist movement--he was a Bolshevik before Russia's St Joseph Stalin and a card-carrying Party member before China's Mao-Tse-Tung. Trained in Moscow, Ho Chi Minh has as early as 1961 acted as a "peacemaker" between the Moscow and Peking governments--and while the Hanoi regime has swung to the pro-Peking tough-line position, Ho Chi Minh is considered still attempting to swing the Russians to be "more revolutionary."

(More)

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Reliable intelligence sources indicate there is still no confirmation or indication that the Russians have sent in ground-to-air missiles to North Vietnam, despite press reports from Moscow that the Russians have ~~agreed to send them~~ persuaded the Chinese to allow their material to be shipped through across the China mainland.

~~xxxx~~ These sources indicate that more significant than ground-to-air missiles would be the sending of super-sonic jet aircraft armed with air-to-air defensive missiles. These planes~~xxxxxxxx~~ probably the MIG-21, comparable to the American F-104--could be flown across Russian territory, rather than passing across China mainland, to be sent ~~xxx~~ directly to Hanoi. However, the North Vietnamese have only one jet-length runway capable of being used by the MIG-21, according reliable sources.

The Soviets have reportedly given to Indonesia and to India the super-sonic MIG-21 jet, armed with homing missiles, "but are now looking silly if they don't give these jets to a fellow socialist country," a traveler from Hanoi reported.

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"Hanoi can't protect North Vietnam with a million missiles," one reliable source indicated. "It takes a long time to set up missiles--and missiles must have a good radar and communications network to spot the American plans. The Americans can knock out these missiles before they ever become operative--and that's the significance of the American raids on radar installations and communication networks."

"To have a really meaningful air defense system, the Russians must give Hanoi jet-fighter aircraft with homing missiles on them," the source continued. "It's ^{very} surprising if the Russians are not already trying to do something like this."

The North Vietnamese air force strength, according to recent figures, numbers about 50 planes, mostly MIG-15's and 17's, ^{which} ~~which both Russia and China are capable of producing.~~ So far, the MIG-21, the super-sonic advance model, has not yet appeared in combat in North Vietnam. The Russians produce this model, but the Chinese Communists can not.

~~Viet~~ South Vietnamese intelligence sources indicate that several thousand North Vietnamese pilots during the past ten years have been sent to the Soviet Union for jet-fighter training. These pilots could be returned to North Vietnam to fly ^{either} ~~either Soviet or Chinese-made~~ jet aircraft. Some South Vietnamese intelligence sources indicate these trained pilots and technicians may also have been taught to operate missiles.