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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam  
for the President's Eyes Only

7 September 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Liberation Front Comment on the Alliance: The Liberation Front representative in Hanoi took advantage of the recent visit to North Vietnam of some Japanese leftists to promote the Communists' new front in South Vietnam, the National Alliance.

The purpose of the Alliance, said the Front spokesman, is to establish a "people's revolutionary government." He asserted that the Liberation Front wholeheartedly supports the Alliance and said the Alliance is distinguished from the Liberation Front by being more broadly based and having extensive urban support.

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Postwar Economic Planning: Hanoi apparently is making contacts in bloc countries for postwar economic development. [REDACTED] that the North Vietnamese Ministry of Light Industry sent a delegation to East Germany and Hungary this past summer to investigate East European assistance to the North Vietnamese food industry. One of the delegates mentioned traveled to France last year to investigate the prospects of French assistance in the light industry field.

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Conditions in Hanoi Area: [REDACTED] there was a rice shortage caused by cold weather this spring. Although some rice reserves were being released, most Vietnamese were forced to eat bread as a substitute. The cold spell apparently had not affected the supply of meat and vegetables, as there were ample supplies of these items in Hanoi markets.

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**Support for Soviets:** [REDACTED] continues to report Hanoi's strong support for the Soviets on the Czechoslovak issue. [REDACTED] the North Vietnamese Foreign Ministry still refuses to receive the Czech chargé or consider his demarches. In addition, Hanoi press media continue to publicize the Soviet cause.

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**More on Ho's Health:** Western diplomats who attended national day celebrations in Hanoi described Ho Chi Minh as appearing "venerable but in excellent health," [REDACTED]

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

**Hanoi on US Election and Antiwar Sentiment:** Hanoi media are keeping up a drumfire of propaganda concerning the US elections and antiwar sentiment in the United States. The essence of the message is that the recent nominating conventions of the two major parties proved nothing and that any American president will eventually have to bow to those forces opposing the war and find a way out. Chief negotiator Xuan Thuy made an unusually explicit argument along these lines at the formal session of the Paris talks this week.

The latest propaganda piece taking this line is a commentary in the party daily Nhan Dan on 8 September which was broadcast over the international service in English. Most of the editorial played the Democratic Party and its platform plank on Vietnam, probably because the Chicago meetings generated such extensive publicity for the antiwar protesters. The message of the editorial, however, was that the "scramble for the presidential chair" was unimportant--it was confined to US "monopoly circles." The only important part of the election process was the opportunity provided "progressive forces" opposing the war in Vietnam to press their position on the candidates.

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Nhan Dan restated Hanoi's position on ending the war by quoting Premier Pham Van Dong's national day speech. This speech is being widely quoted as Hanoi's latest authoritative statement, and Nhan Dan repeated the Premier's peace terms in full--an immediate cessation of the bombing, withdrawal of US troops, and recognition of and negotiation with the Liberation Front on problems of South Vietnam.

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