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SPECIAL ANNEX IV

Sino-DRV Air and Ground Action, February 1965 to February 1966

Sino-North Vietnamese air cooperation, begun after the Tonkin Gulf, became closer and was considerably improved during the period under review (February 1965 to February 1966). Using intelligence from

DIA, INR reported on this cooperation which continued to develop despite the fact that the Russians ~~took over~~ supplying fighters and replaced Chinese training personnel by the spring of 1965. A number of developments suggested preparations for the possible use of Chinese fighters over North Vietnam as well as for the defense of Chinese territory. B1

In China, construction began on four more air fields in South China and on Hainan Island, one of which--Tienyang--was well-located for possible operations over North Vietnam. Chinese fighter strength at other southern bases was augmented further in number and quality

Late in the year, as US bombing increased in intensity and moved to targets closer to Communist China, Sino-NVN coordination was further expanded and improved. B1

At the same time, there were a series of flights by North Vietnamese planes to Chinese bases, and Peitun/Yunnani began to be used by the North Vietnamese for training and maintenance. During the same period, Chinese air patrols along the border were stepped up and, on December 24, 1965, the Chinese crossed into North Vietnam to shoot down a drone which had appeared on its way into China. This was the first such instance, but Hanoi took credit for the action. During the pause, Chinese fighters continued to pursue US recce flights which had been over China but, of greater concern, was the fact that Chinese fighters were detected on several occasions in January making practice penetrations of North Vietnamese air space at altitudes compatible with the CAP cover supporting strike missions. As US policy-makers weighed choices for future actions in light of Hanoi's unresponsiveness to the pause, INR brought these developments to their attention, warning of possible Chinese intervention if the strike program was sharply escalated.

On the ground, in mid-June 1965, B1

INR watched this development closely, bringing analyses of new movements to the attention of Department officials concerned.

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