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A RECURRING CONCERN DURING THE CONGRESS WAS THE PERCEPTION OF THE DERAILING OF VIETNAMESE-SOVIET RELATIONS AS THE USSR LEADERSHIP LOOKED INCREASINGLY TOWARD THE WEST FOR ASSISTANCE IN STABILIZATION OF ITS DYNAMIC DOMESTIC EVENTS AND DISTANCED ITSELF FROM THE PROMINENT, REMAINING SOCIALIST REGIMES- VIETNAM AND CUBA.

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CITE

SERIAL:
PASS:

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT CLASS-SECRET
DIST: 03 OCTOBER 1991

COUNTRY: VIETNAM

SUBJ: VIETNAMESE OFFICIAL'S VIEWS ON NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. AND CHINA

DOI: LATE AUGUST 1991

SOURCE:

6. AS THE CONVERSATION PROGRESSED [REDACTED] DID MENTION THAT HE HAD BEEN ASKED BY AIR VIETNAM TO APPROACH A MAJOR U.S. COMMERCIAL CARRIER REGARDING THE PROSPECTS FOR POSSIBLE SALE/LEASING OF AIRCRAFT IMMEDIATELY UPON EXPIRATION OF THE TRADE EMBARGO. THE VIETNAMESE AIRLINE ALSO WAS INTERESTED IN A FLIGHT TRAINING PROGRAM BEING ESTABLISHED FOR ITS CREW MEMBERS. HOWEVER, ALL PARTIES READILY AGREED THAT COMPENSATION FOR EITHER AIRCRAFT OR TRAINING WOULD HAVE TO BE "IMAGINATIVELY ARRANGED" AS VIETNAM SIMPLY DID NOT CURRENTLY HAVE HARD CURRENCY FOR SUCH ACTIVITIES.

7. FINALLY, [REDACTED] THE MAJORITY OF VIETNAM'S NEW LEADERSHIP TEAM APPEARS CONFIDENT THAT THE TRADE EMBARGO WITH THE U.S. WOULD BE LIFTED BEFORE YEAR'S END. [REDACTED] BELIEVED THAT VIETNAM WAS NOW ACTING IN GOOD FAITH CONCERNING THE PREVIOUSLY CONTENTIOUS ISSUE OF THE POW'S AND MIA'S AND THAT U.S. BUSINESS WOULD SOON BE LOBBYING HARD FOR ENTREE INTO THE VIETNAMESE MARKETPLACE, PARTICULARLY IN THE AGRICOMMODITY SECTOR.

ACQ: (EARLY SEPTEMBER 1991)

DISSEM:

REPORT CLASS-SECRET

DECL: OADR DRV [REDACTED] BY RECORDED REPORTING OFFICER. ALL PORTIONS CARRY CLASSIFICATION AND CONTROLS OF OVERALL DOCUMENT. END OF MESSAGE
SECRET: BT

2. [REDACTED] AT THE SEVENTH PARTY CONGRESS HELD EARLIER THIS YEAR, THE COUNTRY'S NEWLY EMERGING LEADERSHIP DECIDED THAT IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH CHINA WAS THE LINCHPIN TO ENSURE THAT VIETNAM WAS NOT ISOLATED IN FUTURE ASIAN POLITICAL AFFAIRS. TOWARD THAT END, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS NGUYEN CO ((THACH)) WAS PRESSED INTO STEPPING ASIDE. HE HAD REPEATEDLY BEEN IDENTIFIED AS THE PRINCIPAL SPOKESMAN IN THE ANTI-CHINESE ELEMENTS OF THE "OLD LEADERSHIP" AND HIS OUSTER HAD BEEN A KEY STIPULATION BY THE CHINESE IN ANY MOVEMENT TOWARD IMPROVED RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. PROF. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] BELIEVED THAT THE NEW MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS WAS DISTINCTLY MORE POSITIVELY INCLINED TOWARD CHINA.

3. IN WHAT [REDACTED] ACKNOWLEDGED AS AN APPARENT CONTRADICTION, THE NEW MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IS PRIVATELY LESS FAVORABLY DISPOSED TOWARD NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. THAN WAS THACH BUT THE NEW LEADERSHIP AS A WHOLE HAS BOTH PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY DISPLAYED A NEAR OBSESSION WITH RECTIFYING THE POW/MIA MATTER AND REALIZING AN END TO THE U.S.-IMPOSED TRADE EMBARGO. ACCORDING TO [REDACTED] THE PARTY CONGRESS CONCLUDED THAT REINITIATION OF TRADE WITH THE U.S. WAS CRITICAL TO VIETNAM EMERGING FROM THE SUSTAINED ECONOMIC MALAISE, PARTICULARLY AS SOVIET AID DRAMATICALLY DIMINISHED. THROUGHOUT THE CONGRESS VARIOUS PROPOSALS WERE TABLED REGARDING THE FORMULATION OF JOINT U.S.-VIETNAMESE TEAMS TO EXPEDITE THE SEARCH FOR MISSING U.S. SERVICEMEN OR THEIR REMAINS.

4. [REDACTED] TALKED OF THE APPOINTMENT OF MANY HIGH LEVEL OFFICIALS AT THE PARTY CONGRESS AS CLEAR EVIDENCE OF THE "YOUTH MOVEMENT" SWEEPING THROUGH VIETNAMESE LEADERSHIP RANKS. IN FACT, HE CHARACTERIZED HIMSELF AS A "TRANSITIONAL FIGURE" DUE TO HIS AGE [REDACTED]

ACTION DIA(1) (U.S.G.)
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NWS(1) DAT-3(1) DIO(1)
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+CSAF WASHINGTON DC
+CMC WASHINGTON DC
+MAC INTEL CTR SCOTT AFB IL//IN//

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