

September 1966

Information on the Visit of a Czechoslovak Party and Government Delegation Headed by [Czechoslovak Prime Minister] Comrade Lenart in North Vietnam, 24-28 September 1966

Citation:

"Information on the Visit of a Czechoslovak Party and Government Delegation Headed by [Czechoslovak Prime Minister] Comrade Lenart in North Vietnam, 24-28 September 1966", September 1966, Wilson Center Digital Archive, PAAA-MfAA, Botschaft Moskau-Politische Abteilung, Microfiche 001170, 8-9. Translated from German by Lorenz Lüthi. <https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/117740>

Summary:

Information on a Czechoslovak delegation to the DRV. The Czechoslovak delegation assess the Vietnamese situation and determine that the Vietnamese successes are overestimated while American strength and fighting potential are underestimated. The Czechoslovak and Vietnamese groups disagree on China, with the Czechoslovak delegation saying the Vietnamese are simply unable to take a stance against China because it would jeopardize the aid they are receiving.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

German

Contents:

Translation - English

Talks, whose contents we summarize here, occurred on several occasions between comrades of the embassy and [Czechoslovak] comrades, who accompanied the [Czechoslovak] delegation as specialists or journalists. The [following] comments should be considered as initial information. A more detailed report will follow after the receipt of information already announced on the results of the visit by the [Czechoslovak] MFA.

1. The Czechoslovak comrades gained the impression that leading Vietnamese comrades do not have a clear political conception on the solution of the national problem. In talks with them, no clear strategy or tactic of the party, bearing in mind national and international aspects and influences, could be discovered. The one-sided thesis of victory through people's war, on which political mass work is focusing, is dominant.

2. There are discrepancies between the evaluation (by the Vietnamese comrades) of the situation, especially in the military field, and the actual situation. The military successes of the heroically fighting Vietnamese people, which doubtlessly exist, are overestimated, while the military strength of the US and the possibility of the exacerbation of the situation by the US are underestimated.

3. During the complicated discussions on the contents of the communique, which lasted 44 hours all in all, different opinions on the attitude of China existed. The [Czechoslovak] comrades made a statement in which they condemned the Vietnamese position. The Vietnamese comrades did not accept the [Czechoslovak] point of view, and opposed to include a passage on the position of the leaders of the CCP in the communique, and pointed out that they receive aid from China, among other things, rice for the provisioning of the population. According to the opinion of the [Czechoslovak] comrades, the Vietnamese comrades cannot adopt officially any other attitude, because otherwise effects will occur which they will experience negatively. But in personal talks, some Vietnamese comrades expressed that they don't agree with Chinese positions. The [Czechoslovak] comrades hold the opinion that a clarification process occurs [at the moment] within the leadership of the Vietnamese party in this question.¹

[...]

1. For Czechoslovak evidence see James G. Hershberg, "A Half-Hearted Overture: Czechoslovakia, Kissinger, and Vietnam, Autumn 1966," in Lloyd Gardner and Ted Gittinger, eds., *Vietnam: The Search for Peace in the Johnson Years, 1964-1968* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), 292-320.