

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 2 December 1968

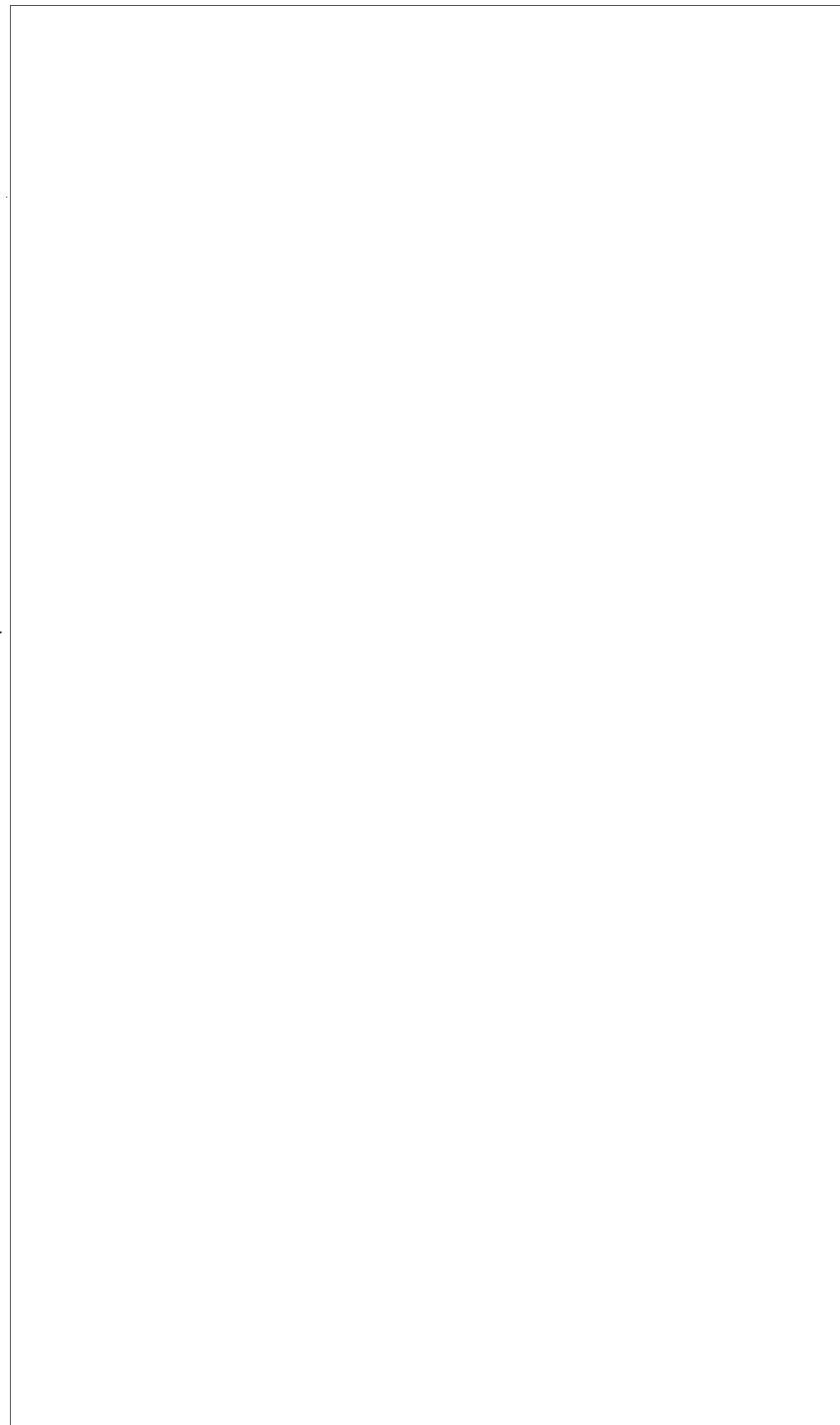


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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
2 DECEMBER 1968

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1. South Vietnam



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2. South Vietnam

Intercepts indicate that several Communist units which have been inactive for the past two months are getting ready for action in northern I Corps. There are also scattered signs of Communist combat preparations farther south, notably in the provinces on the Cambodian border northwest of Saigon. There has been no indication so far that the Communists plan a drive on Saigon itself.

3. Arab Terrorists

With the announcement of two mergers last week, Palestinian terrorist groups edged a bit closer to the unity that has eluded them since 1948. The terrorists also say they have worked out a modus vivendi with the Jordanian Government.

Unity is still a long way off, but every step in that direction adds to the terrorists' effectiveness, both as a military threat to Israel and as a militant voice among their fellow Arabs.

4. Israel-Jordan

Since the reported agreement between the Jordanian Government and the terrorists, Tel Aviv has made it clear that it holds Jordan responsible for recent terrorist incidents. Yesterday's Israeli raid, which blew up bridges on Jordan's only rail line and on a key road, drives the point home.

5. Japan

Sato shuffled his cabinet Friday. His goal was to heal his party's divisions in anticipation of the upcoming debates on Okinawa and the security treaty with the US.

What emerged was a grouping which gives representation to the factions disappointed in the recent election for party president, moves Sato's most prominent potential successors to important positions, and gives key party posts to his two chief lieutenants.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of US Political Attitudes

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2 December 1968

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

2 December 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

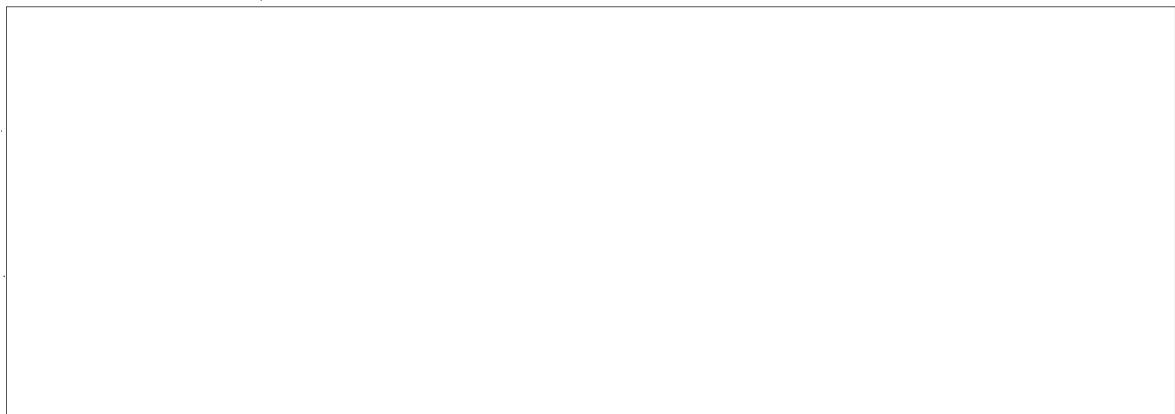
Hanoi Charges US Attacks on North Vietnam: Hanoi has on separate occasions over the weekend accused the US of conducting air attacks and reconnaissance flights over North Vietnam as well as violating the Demilitarized Zone. Referring to recent US pilot rescue missions in southern North Vietnam and to allied patrols in the Demilitarized Zone, Nhan Dan on 1 December described the actions as "serious acts of war" and as a sign that the US had not yet given up its "aggressive designs" against North Vietnam despite the bombing halt.

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Soviets Emphasize Economic Aid to North Vietnam: Commenting on the aid agreements recently negotiated in Moscow between Soviet officials and North Vietnam's Le Thanh Nghi, both Pravda and Izvestia emphasized the economic nature of the Soviet assistance, while virtually excluding references to military aid. The two commentaries, according to Ambassador Thompson, are in line with the Soviets' intention of depicting North Vietnam as a country interested primarily in getting on with postwar economic reconstruction, with the Soviet Union as its chief supporter.

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Military Movements: There have been numerous indications of movement of regular army units and probable infiltration groups in North Vietnam in recent High Command and Rear Services messages.

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Commentary on the Bombing Halt:

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[redacted] the 31 March bombing halt generated a good deal of debate at the man-in-the-street level. Older people [redacted] were prone to see it as an American gesture for peace, while the younger generation felt it marked a victory over the US.

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[redacted] North Vietnamese women who had lost relatives in the war were the real "doves." They were thoroughly tired of the whole business.

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Hanoi Speeds Up Rice Harvest: Further information has been received on Hanoi's efforts to get the most out of its fall rice harvest. On 23 November, the Ministry of Agriculture ordered the mobilization of all available personnel to complete the harvest prior to the bad weather expected by late November. In addition, the ministry cautioned agriculture officials to ensure the quick replanting of rice and other agricultural products.

There seems to be little prospect of North Vietnam becoming self-sufficient in rice production for some time.

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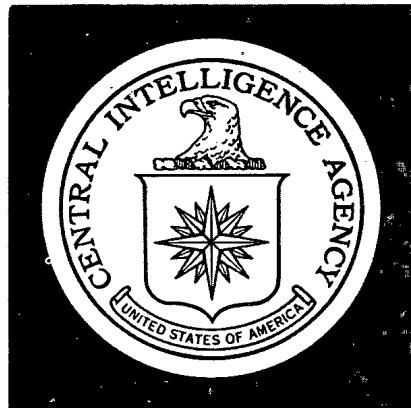
**II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL
ATTITUDES ON THE WAR**

There is nothing of significance to report to-day.

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The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 3 December 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
3 DECEMBER 1968

1. France

The franc is maintaining its own on international markets, but domestic holders continue converting to gold. There are other clouds on the horizon, too. Workers at the big Renault plant are threatening to strike if management refuses new concessions when their labor contract comes up for renewal the end of this month. Student unrest also has increased in recent days.

2. South Korea

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3. Philippines

Marcos, disturbed over what he feels is an "air of hostility" toward the Philippines in Washington, may seek to meet with President-elect Nixon before the inauguration. Marcos did some preliminary brick and mortar work on his relations with the US last weekend when he reshuffled his cabinet and put strongly pro-American Carlos Romulo in as foreign affairs secretary.

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4. Soviet Union

The men who threw out Khrushchev in 1964 were united in little more than their desire to get rid of him. Their differences and disagreements persist. Today at Annex we discuss some of these strains in the collective leadership.

5. Mexico

Barring an incident that could rekindle tempers, there is a good chance the students will be back in their classrooms by the end of the week. Aware that a year's credits could be lost--and that the government is prepared to shut down the universities--the students' strike council has voted to end the four-month-old strike.

6. Ecuador

The cabinet resigned last night and President Velasco began making new appointments. At least two of his new ministers are extreme leftists.

Velasco is three months into his fifth try at governing a nation so beset with economic and social ills that it is almost unmanageable by anyone

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There is mounting urban violence. Slum-dwelling peasants are appropriating private land. The Communists are increasing their strength in the labor movement. And the economy continues its inflationary spiral. Velasco just cannot seem to come to grips with these problems and the army--although wary at the moment--may finally move in to relieve him as it has done in three of his four previous presidencies.

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7. Panama

Relations between Panama and Costa Rica are becoming strained as the Panamanian National Guard clashes with Arias' Costa Rican - based guerrillas. Last night the Costa Ricans closed their border with Panama.

There have been several fights between the Guard and infiltrating guerrillas over the past few days. In one instance, guardsmen crossed into Costa Rica to gun down an Arias man. The deposed president is reported planning to go to Costa Rica himself and, perhaps, enter Panama. This might rally his followers, but it would not improve his chances of successfully overthrowing the junta.

ANNEX

Tensions Within the Soviet Leadership:
Some Recent Indications

The group of leaders which ousted Khrushchev in 1964 was united in little beyond its desire to be rid of Khrushchev himself. It contained, in fact, men who felt he was not modernizing the Soviet system fast enough and those who felt he had already made too many changes. These disagreements have persisted down to the present, constantly straining the collective leadership's facade of unity.

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The most recent report of tension among top Soviet officials [redacted]

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[redacted] Brezhnev and his fellow hard-liners lacked a clear majority in the Soviet Politburo when policy toward Czechoslovakia was being hammered out in August and had carried their case only by appealing to provincial party leaders.

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We have another report that candidate members of the Politburo--who do not ordinarily vote--were called to Moscow on the critical weekend to break a deadlock among the regular members. Thus it seems likely that there was indeed a serious split in the Politburo at the time of the invasion, but we are reasonably sure that all factions outwardly accepted the decision once it was made.

Another dispute--one in some ways with even more far-reaching implications than the one over Czechoslovakia--has been simmering since early last year. It involves a veiled but clearly discernible public debate between Brezhnev and Kosygin, and it is triggered in part by a fundamental difference over the relative effectiveness of Communist and Western forms of economic organization. The debate centers on the extent to which Moscow should make use of "foreign" (i.e. Western) technological innovations. Kosygin claims that Western "monopolies," in their competition for profits, are refining their production and management techniques much faster than the Communists. He warned last February that the Soviets "can be left behind" unless they study

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what the West has learned. Brezhnev in rebuttal has extolled the superiority of "socialist" methods and emphasized what is to be learned from other Communist countries.

This debate has persisted, with some semantic variations by each side, up to the present. In an important speech on 6 November, Politburo member Mazurov made references to the problem and treated it--in a way which resembles other attempts of the present leadership to avoid head-on conflicts--by throwing both points of view into the stew and leaving everyone free to pick out what suits his taste.

While the formal dispute thus remains unresolved, Kosygin's point of view was embodied in three decrees in October dealing with economic reform, agricultural science, and research and development in general. In each case, although the language is sometimes circumspect to avoid stepping too heavily on any toes, clear emphasis is given to the importance of learning from "foreign" innovations. The next test of strength--the implementation of the decrees--presumably is under way now.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

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16
3 December 1968

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

3 December 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Hanoi's Postwar Intentions for the South: [redacted]

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[redacted] the
North Vietnamese are convinced they can eventually
topple the Thieu government. [redacted]

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[redacted] the
Hanoi leaders believe that "sooner or later" the Saigon
government would be replaced by a "new democratic
government disposed toward the North." [redacted]

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[redacted] the Communists have drawn up a list of "traitors"
and their families in South Vietnam numbering about
100,000, including 20,000 in Saigon and 10,000 in
Hue. [redacted] Some party officials believe these
people should be herded into concentration camps fol-
lowing the expected Communist takeover, there to await
a final decision as to how they will be handled as
"traitors to the motherland."

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On Talks: Hanoi propaganda is becoming shriller
on several issues connected with the Paris talks.
The Communists lose few opportunities to exploit is-
sues which they think will sow dissension between
Washington and Saigon, and in a Foreign Ministry
statement of 28 November, Hanoi used language which
was deliberately designed to raise Saigon's tempera-
ture. In countering Saigon's claims that it would
talk only to Hanoi and not the Front, the Foreign
Ministry statement said that "there was no question
of talks between Hanoi and Saigon to solve the Viet-
nam problem."

This new language may be essentially a para-
phrase of the usual Communist demands that to solve
the war the US has to talk to the Liberation Front,
a demand which assures the Front of a pre-eminent
role in the new stage of the negotiations. The new
language, despite the tough tone, does not, however,

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preclude the anticipated discussions including all parties and would appear to leave room for maneuver on who talks to whom on lesser issues.

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Infiltration: Recent intercepts have confirmed earlier indications that at least six infiltration groups are en route south between Thanh Hoa and Vinh.

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The six groups most recently observed have been moving by train. Their numerical designators indicate that their destination is the III Corps area of South Vietnam.

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Sick and Wounded Personnel: During the past week there have been additional indications that the Rear Services manpower system is still devoting major effort to the evacuation of sick and wounded troops. This northward movement is being undertaken with the troop trains which take infiltration groups south. It is apparent, however, that not enough trains are available to accommodate the large numbers of disabled personnel who need to be moved.

On 25 November a message referred to the requirement for railroad cars "with roofs" at Cua Giat in order to transport wounded. Another message on the same day noted that there had been no cars at Hoang Mai for the past few days. On 28 November an unidentified Rear Services commander ordered that the movement of sick and wounded personnel was not to be held up and indicated that he was requisitioning vehicles to keep them moving. Other messages have revealed the backlog of sick and wounded is so great at several points in the pipeline that trucks, ambulances, automobiles, and human bearers are being used to compensate for the lack of rail transportation.

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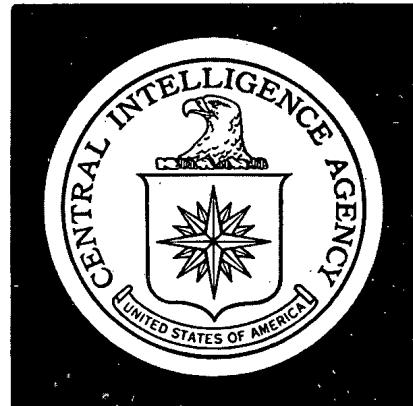


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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Connecticut Student Rally Noted: Hanoi Radio has publicized a student rally at the University of Connecticut held on November 26 to protest the war and to harass the recruiting efforts of the Dow Chemical Company. The broadcast claimed that more than a hundred students participated in the demonstrations.

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The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 4 December 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
4 DECEMBER 1968

1. Israel

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[Redacted] The Israelis have ended a period of relative restraint toward Jordan

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King Husayn's mid-November compact with the terrorist organizations, by which he sought to limit their trouble-making to the Israeli frontier area, clearly had something to do with Israel's reversion to heavy strikes against the Palestinians and their hosts. Yesterday's incidents also show that Iraqi forces in Jordan have lost their relative immunity to Israeli attacks, probably in consequence of their known contributions to terrorist arsenals.

2. Soviet Union

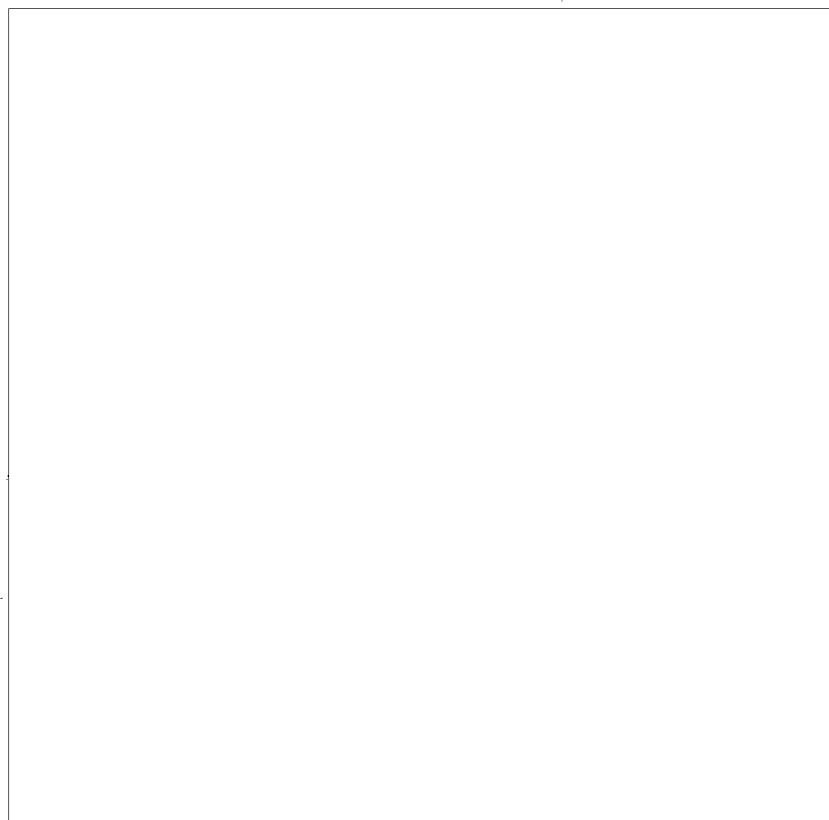
The annual Supreme Soviet examination of the economic budget and plan on 10 December may also be the occasion for high-level discussions of other topics. A central committee meeting normally precedes the parliament session, and the recent recall of senior ambassadors to Moscow suggests that a foreign policy review is under way.

3. Soviet Union

The Russians have harvested a grain crop nearly as good as the record 140-million-ton crop of 1966. They can therefore meet all their domestic needs and foreign commitments and still have some left over to sell for additional hard currency if they so desire.

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4. Communist China



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5. Pakistan

As long as he has the firm backing of the armed forces and the civil service, Ayub can ride out the current wave of antiregime demonstrations and politicking. But reports persist that these traditionally solid pillars of support are being shaken by disaffection over internal corruption and by disenchantment with Ayub personally. If such is the case, then the recent blooming of former Air Force chief Asghar Khan as a political personality could provide a popular focus for an eventual move against Ayub.

6. Venezuela

The electoral count is still too close and too incomplete to call. Official tallies continue to give Christian Democratic candidate Caldera a slight lead over the government party's man, Gonzalo Barrios. The long count is giving rise to recriminations and charges of fraud, but so far only scattered acts of violence have been reported. Security forces remain on full alert.

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7. South Vietnam

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16

4 December 1968

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

4 December 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Hanoi Protest: Hanoi has again issued a pro forma official protest over US air attacks in the southern part of North Vietnam. A foreign ministry statement issued on 3 December claimed that US aircraft attacked populated areas of Quang Binh Province on 2 December, killing and wounding many civilians and destroying their property. In language similar to that of earlier protests, the communiqué called the air strikes serious provocations and demanded that the US stop "all encroachments upon the sovereignty and security" of North Vietnam. There was no threat of specific counteractions, however.

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[redacted] the North Vietnamese are preparing for a possible resumption of US bombing [redacted]
[redacted] Hanoi was expanding air

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raid shelters and children were being moved even farther from their homes. The North Vietnamese hope to forestall US bombing [redacted] by stirring up antiwar sentiments in South Vietnam, the US, and around the world.

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[redacted] Hanoi was looking to Japan for trade and technical assistance. [redacted] Chinese agricultural experts had been withdrawn from North Vietnam and [redacted] both this and Hanoi's refusal to send representatives to the recent Communist conference in Budapest demonstrate North Vietnam's increasing independence from both major Communist powers.

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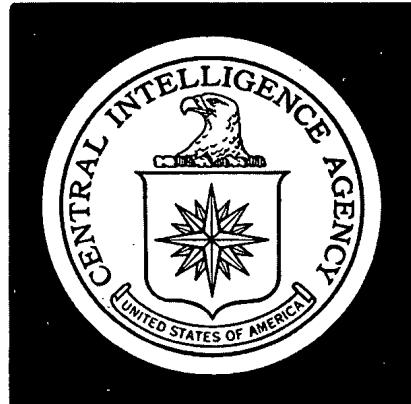
II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Montreal Conference: The "Hemispheric Conference to End the War in Vietnam" ended in Montreal on 1 December with an expected declaration of support for the Liberation Front and an unexpected vote of support for the Quebec separatist movement. The conference earlier became badly split when "left wing" elements tried unsuccessfully to expand the agenda to include anti-imperialism in general and not just the Vietnam war.

The closing session was highlighted by the burning of 25 US draft cards by Hanoi's minister of culture, and by a speech from Black Panther chairman Bobby Seale who pledged solidarity with the Vietnamese against the US.

Five North Vietnamese delegates and the two Liberation Front representatives to Cuba attended the meetings.

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The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 5 December 1968



50X1

23

THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
5 DECEMBER 1968

1. Middle East

The Arab-Israeli border areas were quiet overnight.

Yesterday, Eshkol informed Jordan via the US Embassy in Tel Aviv that Israel has "no intention of widening the conflagration," that yesterday's action was aimed directly at the Iraqis, and that he hopes the Jordanian forces will find it possible to prevent a further deterioration in the situation.

It has long been clear to all parties that Husayn is unable to control the Iraqi troops, and Eshkol is probably trying by his message to put the blame on Jordan if further deterioration does in fact occur.

2. United Kingdom

The outlook for significant improvement in Britain's balance-of-payments is far from encouraging a year after devaluation. Exports have risen more or less in line with original estimates, but imports have not fallen because London has not succeeded in cutting consumer demand effectively. As a result, the deficit this year in balance-of-payments will be about \$1.4 billion, up considerably from 1967.

By next year, the austerity measures of last April are expected to take hold; imports hopefully will then drop while exports continue to rise.

A number of contingencies, however, could upset this forecast: renewed inflation if the government is unable to resist demands for higher wages and prices; sustained high demand for imports; a fall in world demand for British exports; and devaluation of the franc resulting in heightened pressure on the pound.

3. Cuba

Recent rumors of unrest and organized resistance in Cuba are unfounded,

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none of

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the major acts of vandalism and sabotage that have occurred since last March were the result of an organized effort.

[redacted] government officials seem to be living in a reasonably comfortable fashion.

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4. Venezuela

The army has tightened security as uneasiness builds because of the delay in declaring an election winner. Christian Democrat Rafael Caldera's slim margin over Gonzalo Barrios, the candidate of the governing Democratic Action Party, is beginning to shrink after holding steady for the past few days. Returns from rural areas--a traditional source of government support--account for the decline in Caldera's strength.

Both candidates continue to claim victory, and there have been minor clashes between backers of the two groups. Press accounts of widespread shooting and fire-bombing in Caracas, however, are exaggerated.

5. Soviet Union

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16

5 December 1968

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Hanoi Radio Mentions Vance-Lau Talks: Hanoi Radio, in an international service broadcast in English on 3 December, discussed the private meeting the previous day between Ha Van Lau and Cyrus Vance. This is the first time Hanoi propaganda has alluded to the private discussions in Paris. The broadcast mentioned only that Lau vigorously protested alleged US violations of the bombing halt. There was no indication of discussions on other matters.

* * *

Hanoi Reasserts its Independence of Peking: In a series of three broadcasts in Mandarin to Southeast Asia between 25 and 28 November, the North Vietnamese publicly reemphasized their independence of Peking. The broadcasts, which report the results of a meeting of the Federation of Overseas Chinese Associations in Vietnam, paints a glowing picture of the enthusiastic support this group is giving to Hanoi's policies--a picture which is grossly exaggerated if not outright false.

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As reported by Hanoi, the main speeches at the meeting paid only lip service to Chinese-Vietnamese friendship, and the final communiqué emphasized that "the victories scored by the Vietnamese people in the war are due to the correct militant revolutionary line of the Vietnam Workers Party led by President Ho." A speech by one Chang Jung at the meeting reiterated that "the line adopted by the Vietnam Workers Party in dealing with both internal and external affairs...has been correct all along." Chang Jung also allegedly pointed out that "Overseas Chinese in Vietnam...would like to see a truly independent Vietnam."

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Hanoi's tendency over the past few months to disregard Chinese advice has been particularly irritating to Peking. Why the North Vietnamese chose to increase the irritation--much less why they used an established pro-Peking group--is not clear. They could be trying to hide the fact that Sino-Vietnamese frictions exist at all. The broadcast could, on the other hand, be Hanoi's way of neutralizing a pressure group which is responsive to behind-the-scenes direction from Peking.

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Truck Movements: Reports from a roadwatch team in the Mu Gia Pass area indicate that during the last two weeks of November a daily average of 10 trucks moved south toward Laos. Similar numbers were reported in the pass during November and early December last year. Roadwatch teams on Route 912, the other major road linking North Vietnam and Laos, have reported that during the month of November an average of about five trucks per day moved south toward Ban Laboy in Laos.

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The North Vietnamese may be planning to step up traffic levels on Route 912. Signal intelligence indicates that an antiaircraft artillery regiment may be deploying into Laos to bolster defenses along this road, which has been under intensive aerial bombardment in recent weeks.

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Trade Fair:

Hanoi has not yet decided when to hold its proposed trade fair. [] when the fair is held, only those foreign business interests now trading with North Vietnam will be invited. Hanoi will be promoting a wide range of native products at the fair and will be seeking construction materials from potential suppliers abroad.

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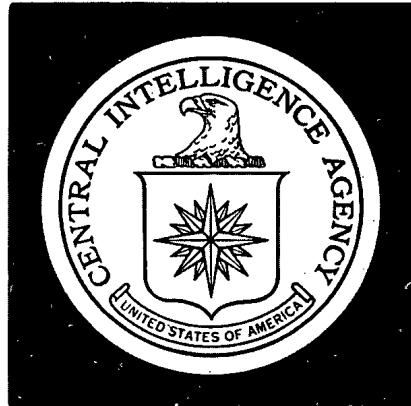
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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL
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~~Top Secret~~ 6 December 1968



50X1

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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
6 DECEMBER 1968

1. Czechoslovakia -
Soviet Union

Both Dubcek and his conservative rivals are concentrating at the moment on drumming up support among party and government workers, while the Soviets work quietly to bolster the conservatives and "realists." Their maneuvering is taking place against a backdrop of continuing demands from the media and the populace at large to end the erosion of pre-invasion liberties.

2. Israel -
Arab States

The Israelis have placed an order with a US firm for equipment to convert some of their helicopters into gunships. They may in fact have used an armed helicopter in their reprisal raids in Jordan this week.

The Israeli helicopter fleet has grown from 46 to over 75 aircraft since the June 1967 war, and more helicopters are on order.

3. Cuba

Havana has given considerable propaganda support to the Black Power Movement in the US.

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4. Cambodia

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5. Thailand

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Thai military leaders are getting more and more nervous about the durability of the US commitment in Southeast Asia. What passes for strategic planning in Bangkok is being done on the assumption that a Vietnam settlement may not protect Thai interests, that SEATO is no longer dependable, and that the US itself may withdraw from the area. Some Thai leaders are even talking about a detente with Peking.

All this worry seems unlikely to produce much change in Thai policy, however. The alternatives to the links with the US are either unrealistic or unpalatable, and in any case the Thai are usually able to avoid facing up to difficult questions such as these.

6. Iran -
Soviet Union

The Shah treated Governor Scranton to some of his trademarked Soviet-menace rhetoric in their conversation this week. Recent Soviet naval visits in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean have heightened his anxieties, and he told the Governor that both he and the Saudis are on the alert for more radical noises from Kuwait, which is currently interested in acquiring Soviet arms.

The Shah also said his visit to Moscow in late September left him with the impression that Kosygin (whom he likes) has dropped from number two in the Soviet hierarchy, having been replaced by Podgorny (whom he distrusts). This worries the Shah, who evidently places more weight on apparent shifts in the Kremlin's pecking order than we are able to do as long as the top Soviet leadership remains collegial.

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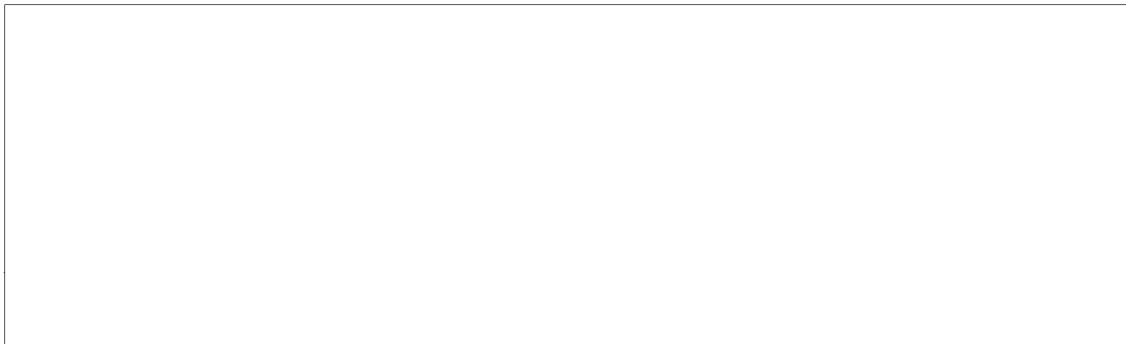
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Cuba

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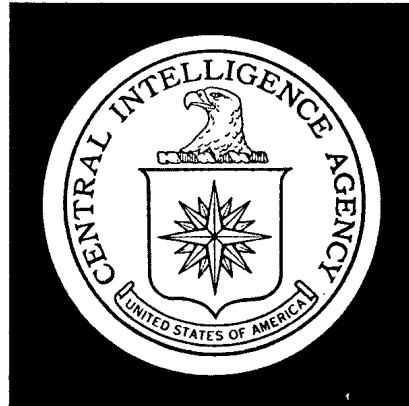
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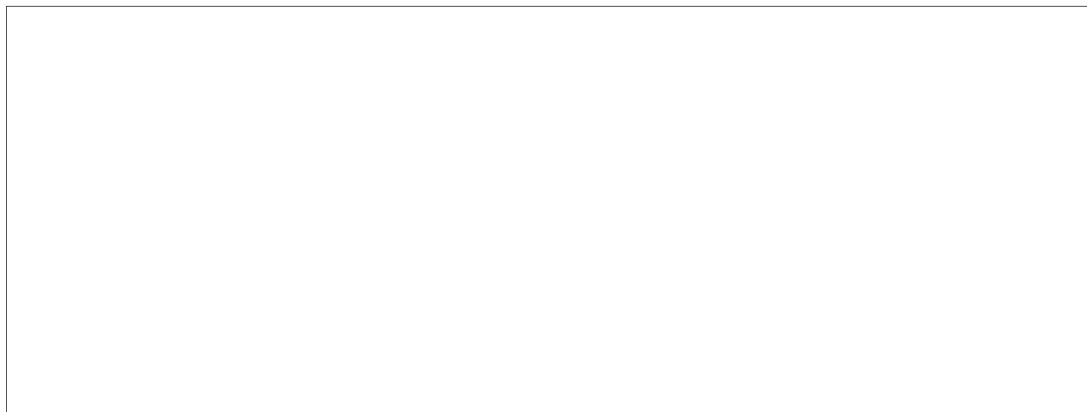
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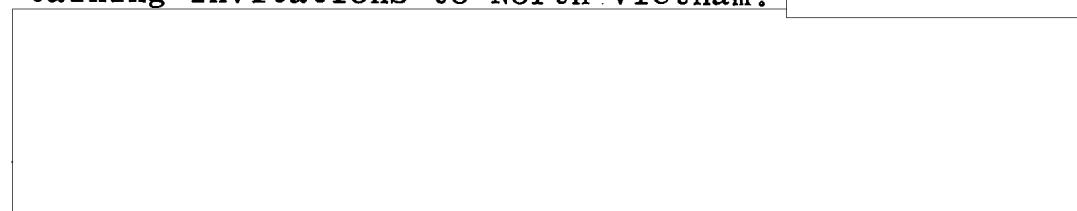


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More Protests on Demilitarized Zone: Hanoi has issued another strong protest over allied military operations in the Demilitarized Zone and north of the 17th Parallel. On 5 December a foreign ministry statement was broadcast on Radio Hanoi's domestic service claiming that US aircraft struck villages in southern North Vietnam on 3 December. Although the statement used language similar to that in protests earlier this month, it claimed for the first time that the battleship New Jersey had shelled the northern half of the Demilitarized Zone.

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Burchett Activities: The peripatetic Australian journalist and self-proclaimed explainer of Hanoi's views is a much sought after man in the UN, where he holds temporary press accreditation. A good many newsmen are trying to get his help in obtaining invitations to North Vietnam.

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Food Problems: Distribution problems are continuing to make North Vietnam's food situation difficult, although imports from other Communist countries probably have offset shortages.

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Poor harvests since 1965 have intensified shortages in traditionally food-deficit areas, and the regime has attempted to assure minimum levels of consumption. The ration system has been inhibited to some extent by diversion of food to the black market.

Imports of food during the first eleven months of 1968 amounted to 681,300 tons--an increase of about 50 percent over the eleven-month total last year.

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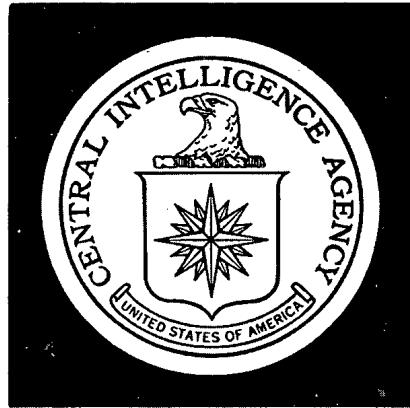
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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing of significance to report today.

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The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 7 December 1968



50X1

23

THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
7 DECEMBER 1968

1. Finances

The main Western foreign exchange markets remain skittish, with investors and traders skeptical that corrective measures will work. Yesterday there was a good deal of movement from the franc and pound to the West German mark. Things had improved for the French and British by the time the markets closed, but Friday's trading illustrated traders' nervousness. They are especially jumpy before a weekend, when most exchange rate adjustments are announced.

2. Rumania -
Warsaw Pact

A Pact summit meeting is planned to settle details of military exercises to be held in Rumania next year. The Rumanian first deputy foreign minister who passed on this information said Pact staff officers reached no decisions on maneuvers when they met recently in Bucharest. No firm date has been set for the summit, although it may be soon.

The Rumanians have been sticky about the whole subject of maneuvers on their territory, and, while their leverage is not great, this may explain why the question has to be handled by chiefs of state. We anticipate the Pact leaders would also use this meeting as a forum from which to answer recent NATO statements on Eastern Europe.

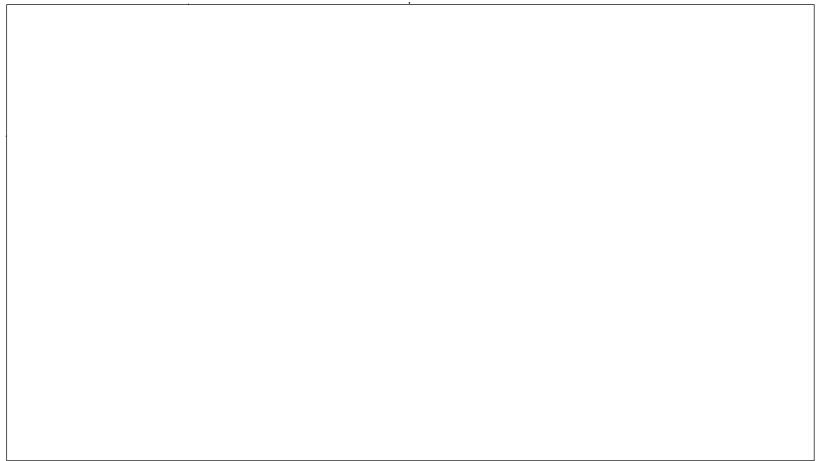
3. France

Communist labor leaders are showing a new willingness to challenge the government, and this week took the lead in organizing strikes in the automobile industry. Their rally cry is that the austerity program will wipe out gains labor made last spring. This new assertiveness contrasts with the cautious tactics the Communists followed in May, and seems designed to regain the ground they lost thereby.

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4. India -
Soviet Union

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5. Nigeria

The British, convinced that fresh supplies of arms have indefinitely prolonged the Nigerian civil war, will try again to mediate. London now plans to send a cabinet minister to meet with Biafra's Ojukwu and with Gowon. The minister will try to get them together for direct negotiations. At the moment, however, there is little reason for optimism. Ojukwu remains unbending in his determination to keep Biafra alive and Gowon is convinced his Federal forces can still inch forward to victory.

6. Australia

"The fortress Australia concept is no longer in the picture,"

yesterday. The Australian went on to say the cabinet had just finished an appraisal of Australia's strategic position and concluded the frontier really begins in Southeast Asia.

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Canberra strategists will now be preparing position papers advocating retention of Australian forces in Malaysia and Singapore after British withdrawal in 1971. The Australians, however, will still be looking over their shoulder to make sure the US is behind them.

7. Pakistan

[redacted] Pakistani military officers are becoming uneasy about the political situation and Ayub's leadership.

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Ayub seems to have things under control, and the army has heretofore been loyal to him.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of US Political Attitudes

Top Secret 50X1

7 December 1968

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

7 December 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Liberation Front Communiqué: The Liberation Front's top leadership has called for a stepped-up Communist effort in South Vietnam, with special emphasis on political tactics. A communiqué, issued by the presidium of the Front's central committee on 6 December, heavily stressed the role of the "political struggle" while listing the Communists' immediate tasks in light of the US bombing halt and Paris talks.

This reinforces other signs that political tactics are assuming increasing importance in the enemy's over-all effort in the South. The Front's statement is another indication that the enemy has launched an accelerated political, psychological, and proselytizing campaign, probably with a view toward improving the Communist position for a negotiated settlement. It calls, in particular, for strengthening and expanding Communist influence over the people of South Vietnam through the movement to set up a quasi-governmental administrative apparatus in South Vietnam.

According to the Liberation Radio broadcast, the communiqué represented the decisions of an enlarged conference of the presidium held earlier this month to review recent events and "set forth tasks and trends of activity in the days ahead." The broadcast indicated that high-level officials from most parts of the Communist apparatus in South Vietnam were in attendance.

* * *

Farm Supplies Being Shipped South: Internal North Vietnamese messages show that large volumes of agricultural material for the forthcoming rice planting season are being sent to southern North Vietnam. These messages show that at least a portion of the large amount of goods currently flowing south is not related to the war effort.

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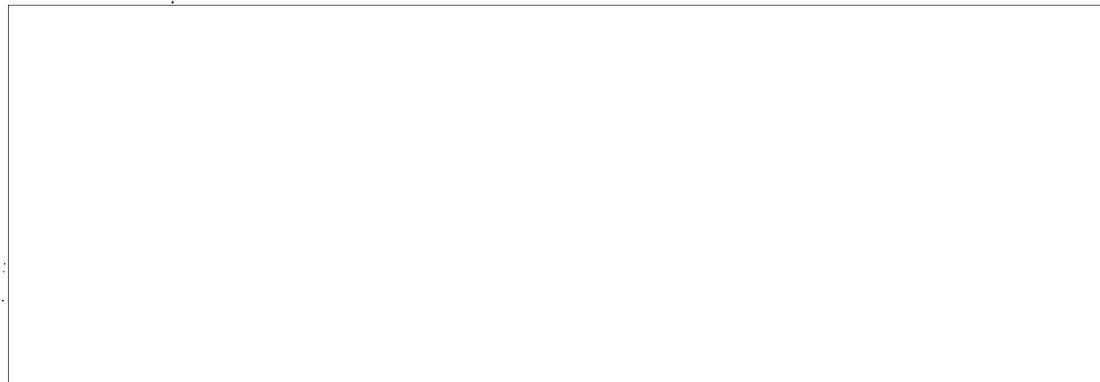
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Foreign Shipping to North Vietnam in October:
Preliminary trade figures for October show that sea-borne imports to North Vietnam increased by 22 percent--from 135,000 tons in September to 164,000 tons in October. This was the highest volume since June.

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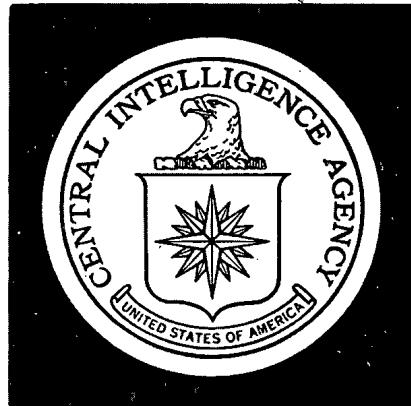
II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL
ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing of significance to report today.

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The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 9 December 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
9 DECEMBER 1968

1. Czechoslovakia -
Soviet Union

The weekend meeting in Kiev between top Czechoslovak and Soviet leaders apparently involved another effort by Prague to get Moscow's "clearance" on an aspect of domestic policy. Dubcek, in this case, probably sought Soviet approval for carrying out some portions of Prague's pre-invasion economic reform program. Economic policy is the subject of a party central committee meeting in Prague scheduled for this Thursday, and the Czechoslovak leaders presumably wanted to find out how far they would be permitted to go.

The communiqué issued after the meeting gives no hint as to how the Czechoslovaks made out.

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2. Japan

Prime Minister Sato, fresh from his recent re-election as party president, looks upon Okinawa as the crucial challenge of his third term.

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3. Venezuela

Final election returns give victory to Christian Democrat Rafael Caldera. He won just under thirty percent of the total vote--only one percent more than his nearest rival, Gonzalo Barrios of the administration's Democratic Action Party.

Government and military leaders have assured Caldera that they will uphold the election results. Some isolated incidents may occur, but security forces are alert to control any demonstrations.

Inauguration day is not until 14 March, and Caldera will be busy in the interim working to put together a coalition government. His Democratic Action rivals have apparently won a plurality of seats in the lower house of Congress.

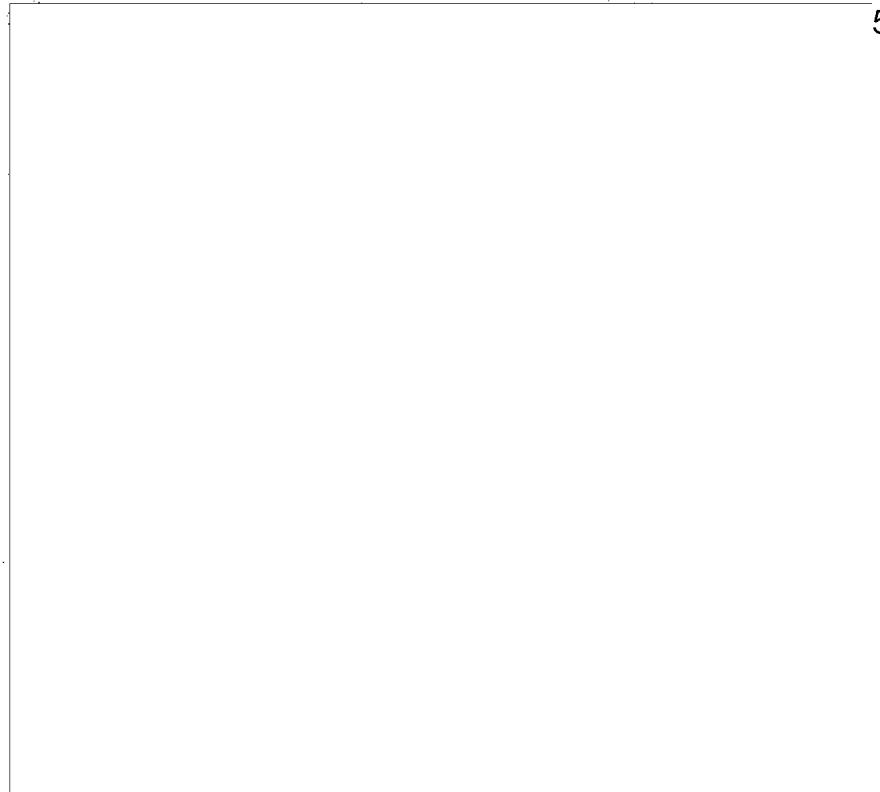
4. Communist China

Recent satellite photography shows that the Chinese have been continuing their nationwide airfield construction program despite the disruptions of the Cultural Revolution. About 60 airfields have been completed, modernized, or started since the program began in 1964.

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5. Latin America

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16

9 December 1968

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

9 December 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

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Another Protest: On 7 December Hanoi broadcast a very brief report of the latest North Vietnamese Foreign Ministry protest against US aircraft entering North Vietnamese air space and US artillery firing into the northern half of the Demilitarized Zone. Hanoi clearly is protesting for the record and is not making a major issue of these alleged US activities.

* * *

Foreign Minister Interviewed: North Vietnamese Foreign Minister Trinh broke little new ground in a recent interview with a Japanese correspondent. In response to questions about the Paris talks and the future political shape of Indochina, the minister mouthed the usual platitudes and cliches. His most notable comment on political matters was one stressing that reunification of Vietnam should not be realized "immediately and in haste" and that contacts between the "two regimes" (in North and South) should be developed in the interim. These are basic points in the Liberation Front's political program but because they imply a good deal of compromise on the part of the Communists, they are rarely made by North Vietnamese officials.

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Trinh made a relatively forthright bid for non-Communist postwar aid in response to questions from his Japanese interviewer. He emphasized Hanoi's self-reliance, but he acknowledged that aid from other countries would be needed and would be accepted as long as North Vietnam's independence and sovereignty were respected. He said that aid from a multi-nation postwar rehabilitation fund would be rejected if the plan was a "manifestation of neocolonialism in collusion with the United States." Otherwise, he said, non-Communist aid, including aid from Japan, would be welcome.

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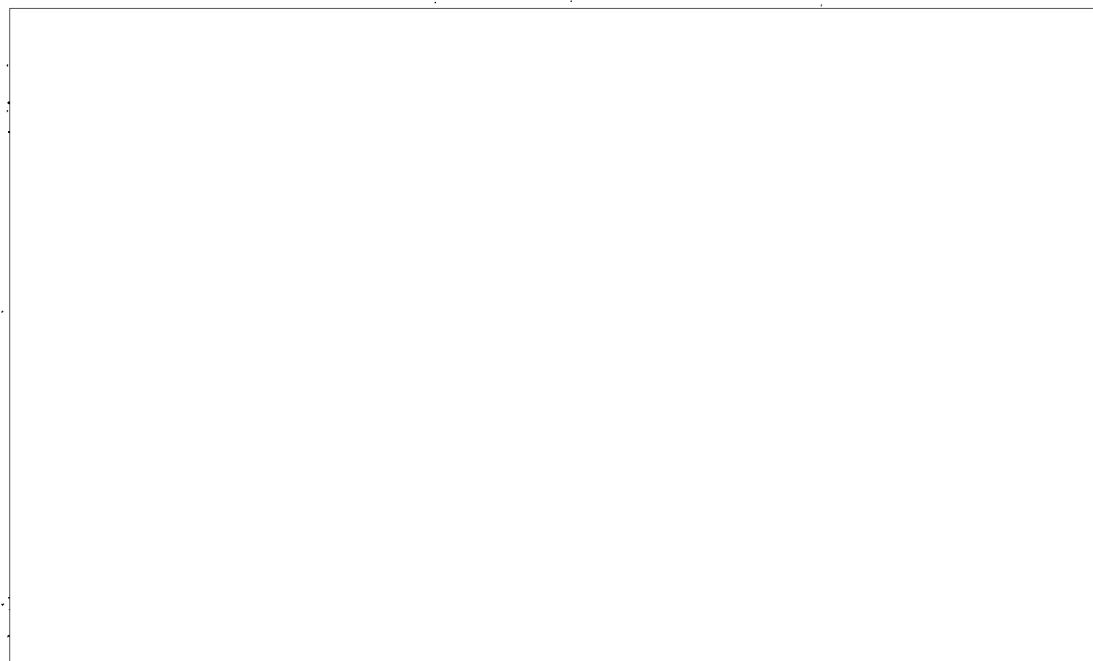
More on Agricultural Problems:

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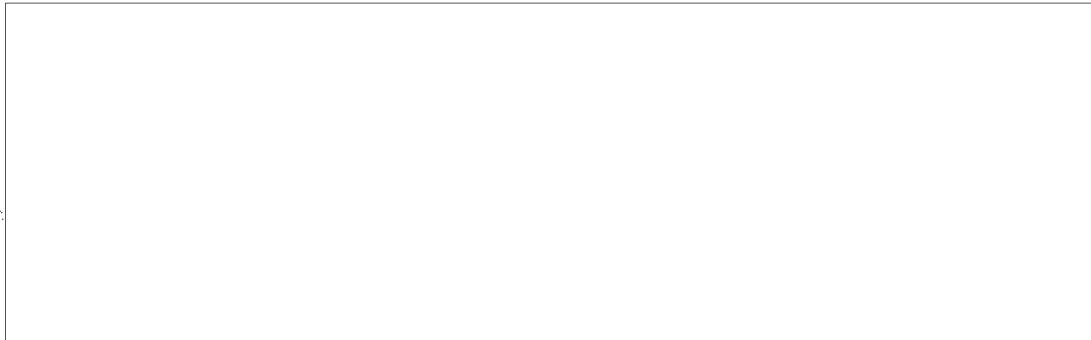
Hanoi is rounding up officials from some of the northwest provinces for a powwow on agricultural problems. The local officials were enjoined to report on results of the 1968 harvest, preparations for next year's crops, and measures to prevent famine and disease (apparently among both humans and animals). The message sounds as if this is another brainstorming session to begin work on some long neglected domestic problems.

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Hanoi Discusses US Redeployment: Hanoi for the first time has reported on the movement of the US 1st Air Mobile Cavalry Division from the northern provinces of South Vietnam into III Corps. In an editorial in the party daily on 7 December, the North Vietnamese alleged that the division had taken "heavy losses" since moving south and claimed these "proved" the "bankruptcy" of US airborne tactics.

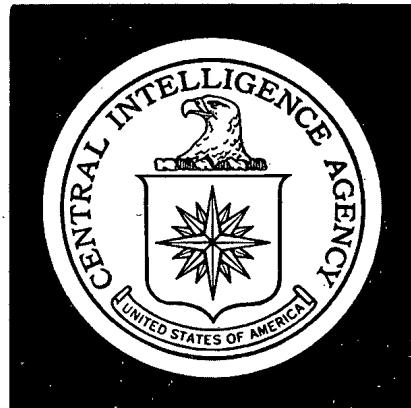
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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Hanoi on Antiwar Activities: An English language broadcast from Hanoi on 8 December rounds up various recent antiwar activities in the US. It devotes two paragraphs to the demonstration on 4 December at New York University, at which a South Vietnamese official was prevented from speaking. It also mentions the refusal of a US naval officer to board a ship for Vietnam duty and the recent appearance of peace activist David Dellinger before the House Committee on Un-American Activities.

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The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 10 December 1968



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23

THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
10 DECEMBER 1968

1. Soviet Union -
Czechoslovakia

The Soviet Central Committee met yesterday and attended to the routine business of passing on the draft economic plan and budget for 1969. These drafts will be given final approval at the session of the Supreme Soviet which opened this morning. The Central Committee also heard a speech by Brezhnev which presumably included some comments on foreign affairs, although TASS did not give any specifics.

The Czechoslovak leaders, fresh from their weekend meeting with the Soviets in Kiev and faced with meetings of their own central committee and legislature in the next week or so, doubtless are anxiously testing the temperature of the breezes from Moscow.

2. South Vietnam

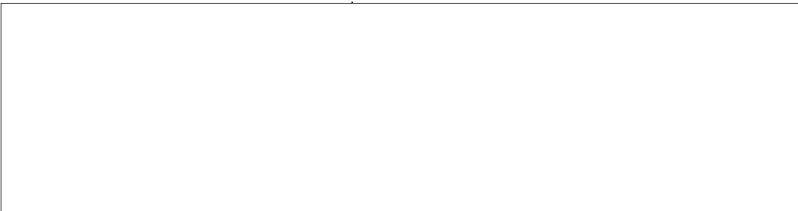
Some portents of a possible Communist offensive are appearing in III Corps. Elements of two enemy divisions are moving from the Cambodian border in the general direction of Saigon. A third division is going into Tay Ninh Province.

Communist message traffic is heavy and the bulk of the North Vietnamese now in the infiltration pipeline appear to be headed for III Corps. Prisoners [redacted] also report plans to attack [redacted]

3. Cambodia

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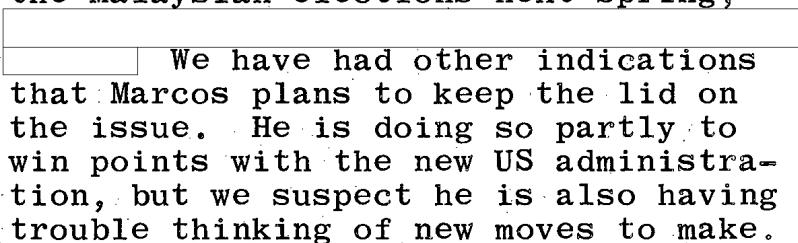
The Cambodian Army is making a special effort to intercept allied ground reconnaissance teams operating in Cambodia. Local commanders in Kratie Province were instructed on 5 December to set up eight "ambush" positions. In this intercepted message, the commanders were told allied "spies" had been landed by helicopter and observed by the Cambodians.



4. Philippines-Malaysia

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Marcos will not make any more moves in the Sabah dispute until after the Malaysian elections next spring,

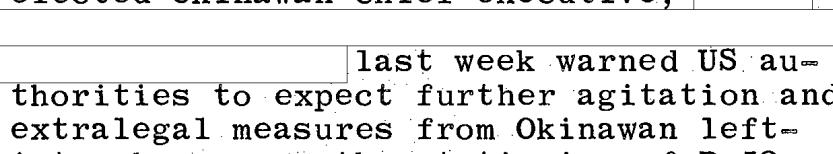


5. Japan-Okinawa

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As the Japanese legislature convenes in extraordinary session today, the opposition's campaign against US bases in Japan is coming into focus. The Komeito Party, an up-and-coming moderate opposition group, has just published the first part of a lengthy study which demands that the number of bases be reduced. The study has already been commented on favorably by the Japanese press.

Sato is feeling the pressure from Okinawa as well. Chobo Yara, the newly elected Okinawan chief executive,



last week warned US authorities to expect further agitation and extralegal measures from Okinawan leftists who oppose the stationing of B-52s on the island.

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6. Rumania -
East Germany

All the states in Eastern Europe still want to get along with each other, notwithstanding the differences which crystallized after the invasion of Czechoslovakia. In a classic example of this instinct, the Rumanian foreign minister turned up yesterday in East Germany on a fence-mending official visit.

7. France -
Soviet Union

There was no follow-through to the strike last week at Renault, partly because the Communist labor federation which called the walkout suddenly became less militant. Parisians are speculating that the federation got word from Moscow to cool it.

Although we have nothing to substantiate this rumor, it does not strike us as improbable. The Soviets value the detente they have achieved with De Gaulle. They have left the impression more than once that they would go to some lengths to avoid making trouble either for him or for the franc. Moreover, they have often showed concern that politically motivated labor agitation could get out of hand, as it did in France last May.

8. Soviet Union -
Nigeria



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16

10 December 1968

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

10 December 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Local Government Reorganization: As part of its effort to restore the economy and return local controls to civilian authorities, Hanoi is currently pushing plans to revitalize its local government structure. Recent public speeches by high party leaders have implied that local authorities were pretty thoroughly neutralized during the years of the bombings as party and military officials took over at all administrative levels to enforce wartime measures and ensure the uninterrupted movement of men and supplies to the South.

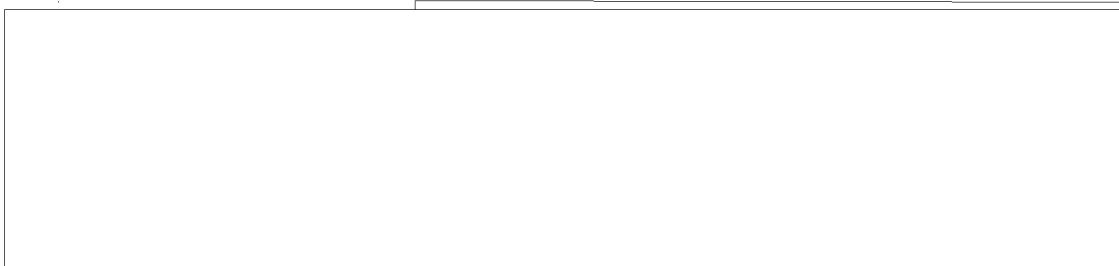
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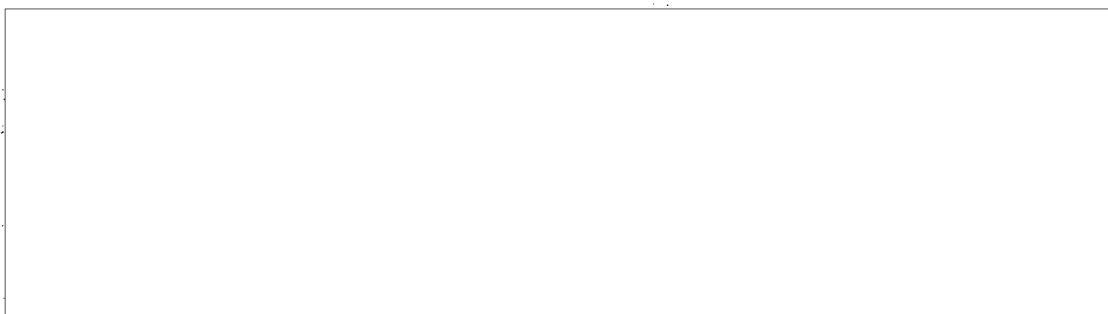
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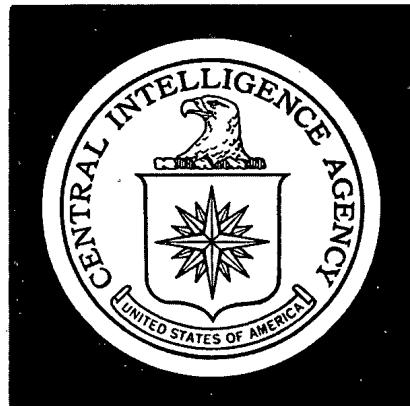
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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing of significance to report today.

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The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 11 December 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
11 DECEMBER 1968

1. Israel

Observers report increased Israeli military activity since early last week. These sightings include more than the usual number of troops moving about and indications that some Israeli reservists have been called up. This means that the higher alert posture assumed last week coincident with the raids into Jordan is being maintained to permit more quick strikes.

Yesterday's dogfight over the southern tip of the Sinai was the first between Egyptian and Israeli pilots in about a month. One Egyptian fighter was shot down, but, so far, there has been no sign that either side plans to follow up the air action.

2. Soviet Union

Finance Minister Garbuzov avoided anti-American diatribes yesterday in presenting the new budget to the Supreme Soviet. This suggests a continued desire not to muddy the water before any strategic arms limitation talks.

The defense budget showed an increase of six percent, and that for science (three-quarters of which is military research and space programs) about 13-14 percent. Because we have not seen the early spadework that would go into major new programs, we are inclined at first glance to question whether the increases in defense and space spending will actually reach the figures given by Garbuzov.

On the whole, we estimate the Soviets probably will spend next year about the equivalent of \$60 billion US on defense and space.

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3. North Korea

One of North Korea's most experienced guerrilla leaders has been made minister of defense--an appointment strongly suggestive that even greater emphasis will be put on unconventional warfare against the South.

General Choe Hyon, a confidant of Kim Il Song's, learned his trade as a partisan fighting the Japanese. He also has commanded the school where North Korean soldiers are trained in infiltration and guerrilla warfare techniques. The 63-year-old Choe ranks fifth in the party hierarchy.

4. Dominican Republic

General Wessin is determined to get back to the Dominican Republic, and he may try to do so surreptitiously. The general's supporters are prepared to help him escape his Miami exile.

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Should he return, Wessin would not pose an immediate threat to Balaguer. Unfounded rumors of coup plots are flying about, however, and Wessin's presence would certainly be unsettling.

5. Brazil

The military and liberal churchmen are butting heads over the recent arrest of three French priests charged with subversion. As usual, the indecisive Costa e Silva looks as though he may be caught in the middle. While the army's case against the three priests has some merit, it is the military's excessive preoccupation with subversion, real or imaginary, which may turn out to be more dangerous. Under army pressure, Costa e Silva probably will shift toward more authoritarian rule.

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6. Panama

[redacted] frustrated

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Arias men are plotting to kill the National Guard's top commanders, Colonels Torrijos and Martinez. Arias' guerrilla movement is foundering and it is quite possible that some such desperate gambit might be tried. The Guard, however, is aware of this plot and its chances for success seem slim.

7. Communist China

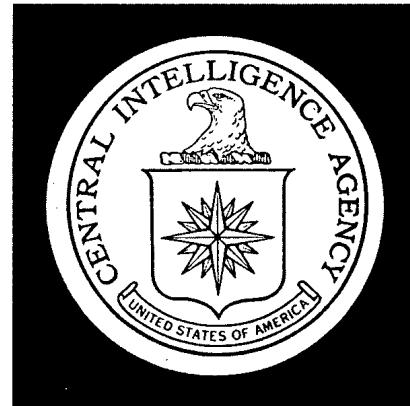
Something big may be afoot in Peking. The Chinese armed forces chief of staff cut short a state visit to Albania and returned hurriedly to the capital on 5 December. All the top leadership has been out of sight since 29 November--some, including Lin Piao and Mao's wife, for more than two months.

There is some possibility that Lin Piao is in southwest China trying to bring feuding factions into line. In any event, both contentious propaganda and the behavior of the leadership raise the prospect that the power struggle has taken a new and crucial turn.

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16

11 December 1968

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

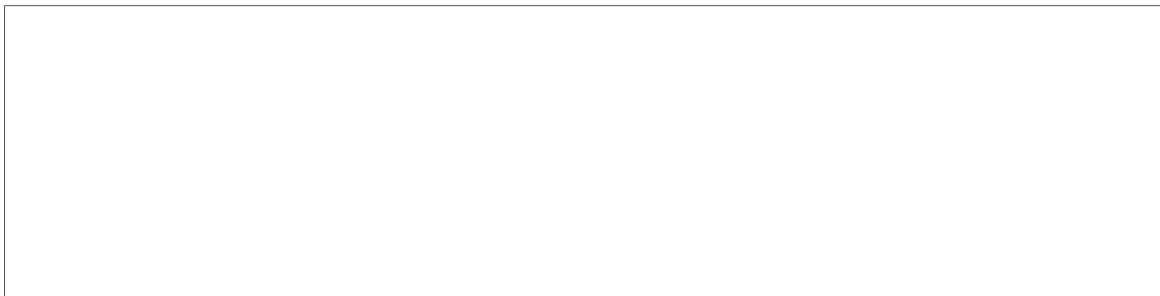
11 December 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

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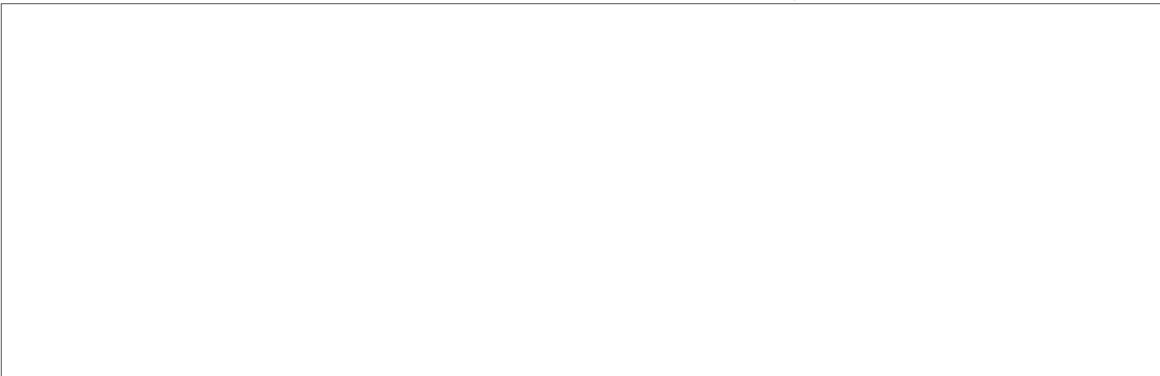
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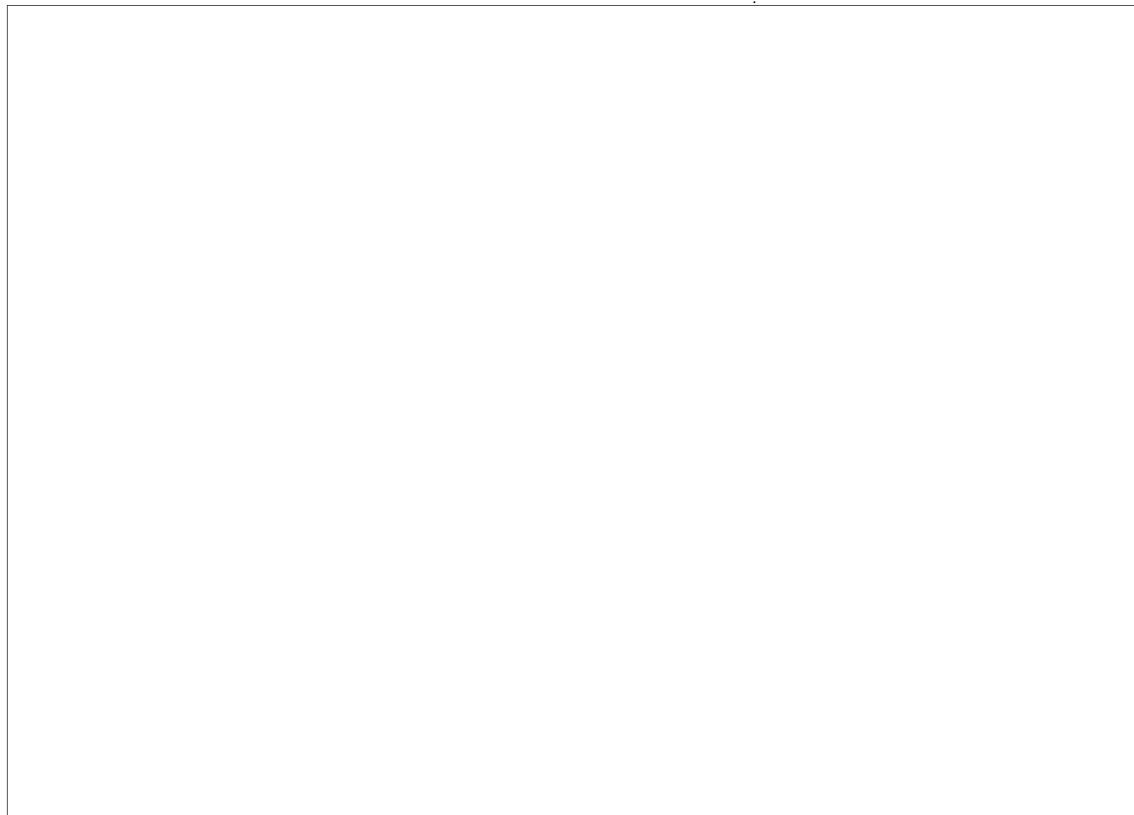
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Top North Vietnamese Diplomats Return to Their Posts After Consultations in Hanoi: At least eight North Vietnamese envoys are en route back to their foreign posts following a general diplomatic recall which began in October.

While in Hanoi, the diplomats almost certainly were briefed on the situation in South Vietnam and Paris and doubtless carry new instructions and guidelines regarding Hanoi's current policies in these areas. In their public and private statements, these officials can be expected to reflect at least the general drift of Hanoi's thinking on the war and Paris talks.

* * *

Hanoi Issues Call for New Effort to Defeat US: The Central Committee Secretariat, in a 10 December circular issued in connection with plans to celebrate National Resistance Day on 19 December, the anniversary of the founding of the National Liberation Front on 20 December and the anniversary of the founding of the People's Army on 22 December, calls for renewed efforts to defeat the American aggressors. The circular claims that 1968 has brought great victories but warns that the enemy remains stubborn and unwilling to renounce his aggressive designs. In light of this, the North Vietnamese people are asked to increase labor output, to mobilize human and material resources for the front line, and to make realistic preparations for early 1969 tasks.

* * *

North Vietnamese Coal Exports to China Increase: Coal exports from North Vietnam to China in December will total 46,000 tons, the highest level in more than six months, according to an intercepted 5 December message. Coal exports to China follow the pattern of total coal exports which suggests that recent production difficulties are being overcome. Production had dropped markedly during the summer from peak levels last spring.

Smelting Plant South of Hanoi Reactivated: [redacted]

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[redacted] for the first time in over two years a smelting plant about 30 miles south of Hanoi on the west bank of the Red River appeared to be in operation. [redacted] the plant was completely illuminated and the glare from the blast furnace was visible.

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

There is nothing of significance to report today.

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The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 12 December 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
12 DECEMBER 1968

1. South Vietnam

The enemy appears to be making ready to start some spectacular fireworks, principally in III Corps. His efforts could begin any time between now and a few days before the Christmas truce which begins on 24 December.

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[redacted] all indications point to offensive actions soon, against military targets outside the capital. Depending on the success of these ventures, another attack on Saigon might follow. A separate memorandum on the situation accompanies today's Brief.

2. Mexico

New student demonstrations are being planned in Mexico City on 13 December. The demonstrators will renew their previous demands for reform but may spice up the affair by adding a denunciation of Diaz Ordaz for "selling out Mexico" at his meeting with President Johnson. We believe the government will take a dim view of any new and prolonged demonstration and is likely to respond with stern measures against the students--even including the closing of schools.

3. Thailand

Communist-led tribal guerrillas are stepping up harassing attacks on police and military units in the north central area of Thailand. Insurgency became a problem in this section of the country only about two months ago. The government's plodding village security program has been seriously set back by the security force's failure to respond to terrorist pressure on the tribesmen. Villages have been abandoned and tribal loyalty to the central government, never strong, has been further weakened.

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4. Egypt-Brazil-
Israel



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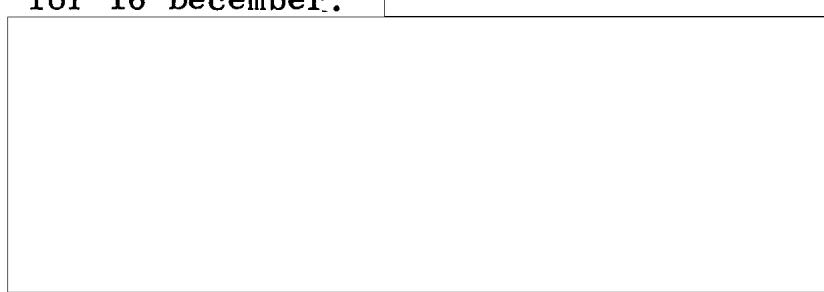
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5. Guyana

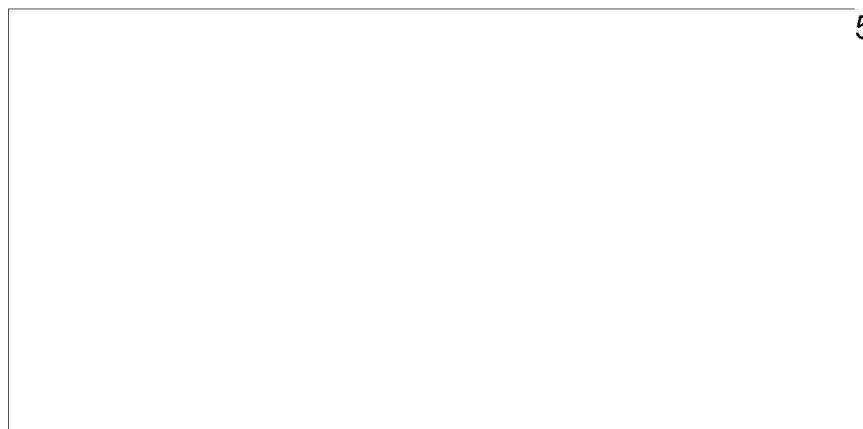
Burnham is busy with planning to
secure victory for his People's Nation-
al Congress in the election scheduled
for 16 December.

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6. Jordan



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7. Soviet Union

Satellite photography shows that the antiballistic missile launch sites around Moscow will be externally complete by mid-1969 and could be operational by early 1970. No other anti-ballistic missile complexes have been detected in the Soviet Union although developmental work at the test range continues.

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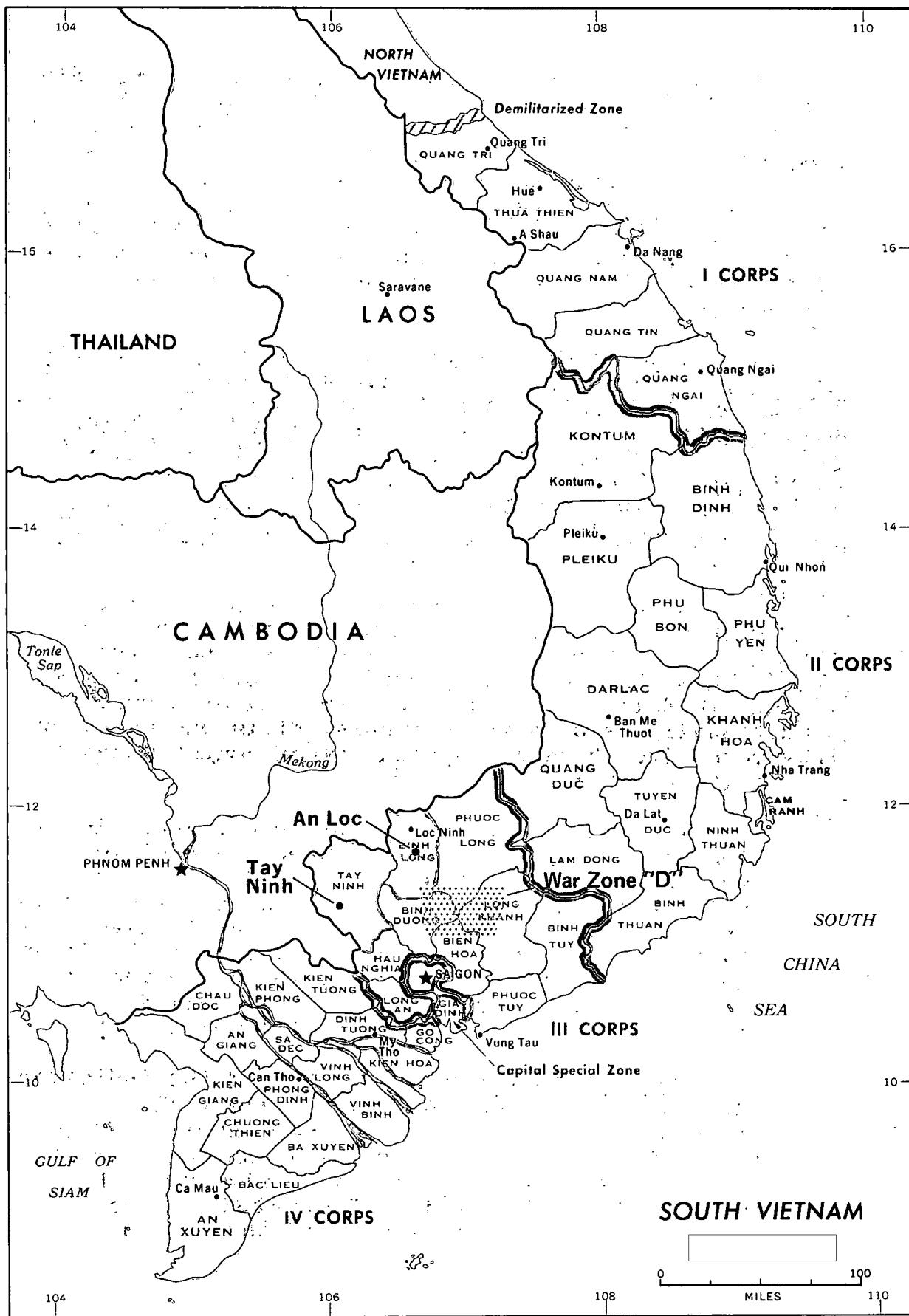
SC 12380/68
12 December 1968

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Indications of an Impending Communist Offensive
in South Vietnam

SUMMARY

There are numerous indications that the Communists are prepared and positioned to kick off a new wave of intensified military action any time between now and Christmas. Most of the indicators point to III Corps as the focal point for the upcoming attacks, particularly those involving infantry assaults. There are also some (but fewer) indications of preparations for ground probes or assaults at various points in IV Corps. In any event, though III Corps will probably be the primary theater of operations, the enemy may launch numerous mortar, artillery, and recoilless rifle attacks, accompanied by some ground action, on allied outposts and population centers throughout the country. Some sharp upsurge in Communist offensive activity is almost certain to develop within the next week or two, and one reliable agent has reported that attacks in III Corps are scheduled to begin on the night of 12-13 December, i.e., during the late morning and early afternoon of Thursday, 12 December, in Washington.

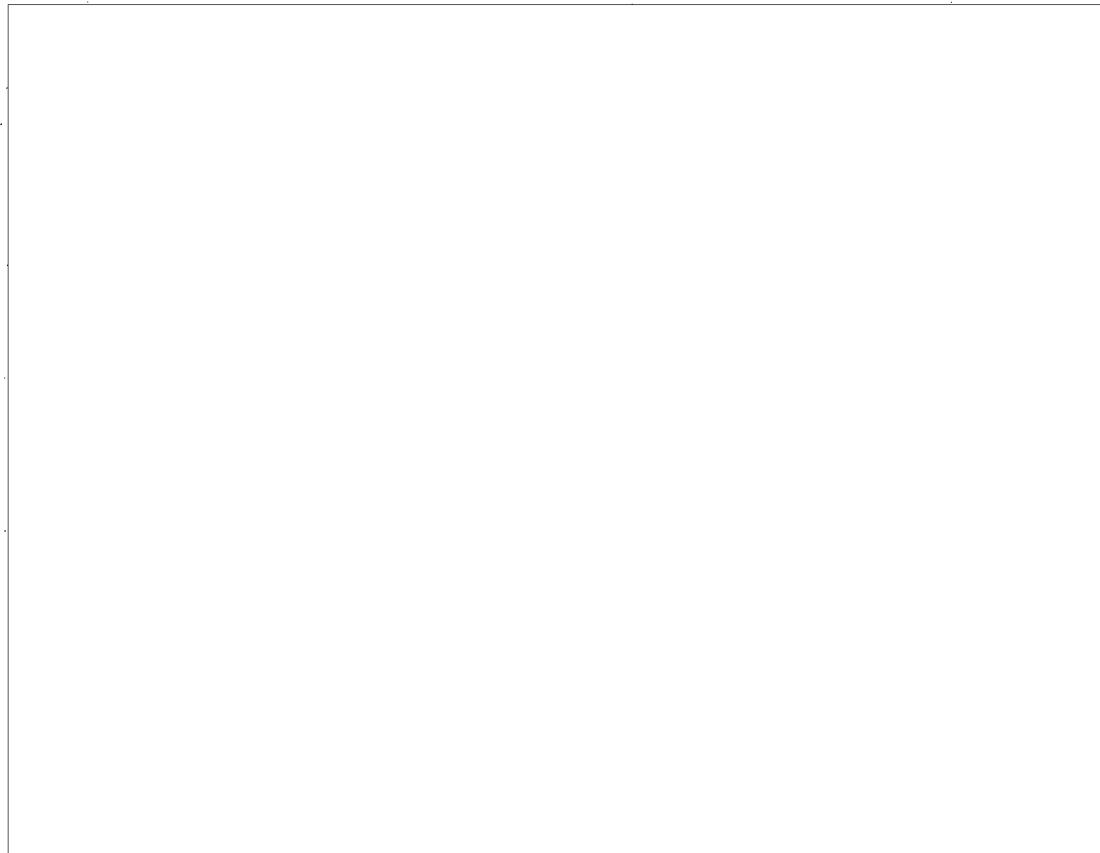


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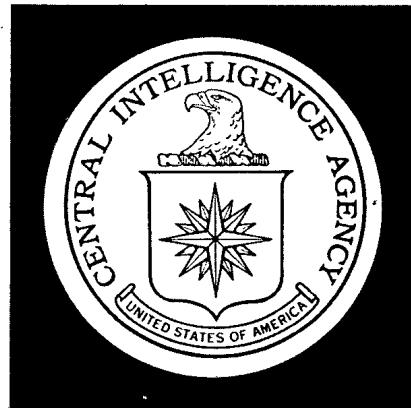
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16

12 December 1968

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

12 December 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Hanoi Again Has Protested US Flights Over North Vietnam: A Foreign Ministry communiqué issued on 11 December charged that US aircraft struck villages in Nghe An and Quang Binh provinces on the 9th. Since 1 November, Hanoi claimed, US aircraft have bombed and strafed "densely populated areas deep inside North Vietnamese territory dozens of times."

The statement was harsher and more threatening than earlier Foreign Ministry complaints. It demanded an end "forever" to US acts of war against North Vietnam and indicated that the Vietnamese would "appropriately punish the US...for their new adventurous steps." Previous statements have not included this kind of retaliatory threat.

* * *

New Liberation Front Negotiating Team: The Liberation Front has appointed a new delegation to attend the Paris talks.

The announcement did not specify when the delegation would be sent to Paris. The Front's representatives now there apparently are empowered only to discuss preliminary procedural problems. There have been several indications that once these matters are resolved, a new, higher-level team will arrive. The announcement of a new delegation hints that the Communists anticipate moving beyond procedural wrangling into substantive talks relatively soon.

The new delegation is headed by four members of the Front's central committee and includes experienced diplomats. It also includes a Front political cadre from the Saigon area and a military officer. Two members of the Front's group now in Paris are also included.

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The delegation will be headed by Tran Buu Kiem, a member of the presidium and chairman of the foreign affairs commission of the Front's central committee.

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Madame Binh, who heads the delegation in Paris, and Tran Hoai Nam, the chief Front representative in Algeria, are the deputy heads of the team. Nam has been a prominent foreign representative of the Front. The fourth-ranking member, Nguyen Van Tien, heads the Front's mission in Hanoi.

* * *

Schools Will Remain Dispersed Outside of Hanoi:
The government has ordered schools to remain dispersed in the countryside despite the US bombing halt. In a directive sent to all provinces as well as Hanoi and Haiphong city education offices on 2 November, the education ministry instructed that the facilities which have been evacuated are to remain in place and continue security and air defense tasks "...in order to defend against resumed enemy bombing."

According to a Western traveler who was in Hanoi in late November and early December, the city's residents have been advised that they may bring their families back at their own risk. Elementary and secondary schools, however, will not be opened.

This directive probably stems partly from real concern in Hanoi that the US might resume the bombing, but it also reflects efforts to jolt the populace out of their tendency to relax their efforts in support of the war.

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Hog Cholera Epidemic in North Vietnam: An epidemic of hog cholera has developed in several provinces of North Vietnam, according to an intercepted message. The vice minister of agriculture, in a 5 December order, directed personnel in North Vietnamese provinces where hog cholera had broken out to discover it quickly and to inoculate and quarantine infected animals as well as inspect all animals prior to butchering.

A cholera epidemic was responsible for the death of a number of cattle in the northern province of Lao Cai and Yen Bai in May of this year. At the beginning of 1968, cholera was reported in three other North Vietnamese provinces.

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

There is nothing of significance to report today.

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The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 13 December 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
13 DECEMBER 1968

1. South Vietnam

Desertions from the South Vietnamese regular armed forces hit a two-year high in September. Combat forces, moreover, are being affected at a rate considerably higher than other units. If the trend continues among combat units, they will have lost about one-third of their personnel in this manner during the year ending in March 1969.

As a result of the growing desertion problem and a decline in the number of available new recruits, the government may soon find it difficult to keep the strength of its regular forces at about 428,000 men.

2. Laos

The government is apprehensive about the fate of Attopeu, the provincial capital in the southeast part of the Bolovens plateau.

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Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese troops had surrounded the town and have been shelling it and the airstrip which serves as its supply point. Souvanna ordered the evacuation of women, children, and other non-essential residents. This could further weaken the resolve of the defenders.

The Communists, however, have been in position to take Attopeu for years. Whether they do so or not is basically a political decision.

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3. Communist China

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4. Iraq

Baghdad is still seething with dissidence.

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There are unconfirmed reports that the ruling Baathists put down another attempt on 11 December. If they prove correct, this will have been the second try in about a month at toppling the group which seized power in July.

5. Israel-Jordan

A new round of military incidents began on 11 December along the Israeli-Jordanian border. The Israelis are responding more quickly than in the past to attacks from Jordan. If skirmishing continues, they ultimately might move across the Jordan River and seize the heights.

In conversations with Governor Scranton, Israeli leaders for the first time were remarkably frank about the "Allon Plan," their complicated proposal for annexation and colonization of a 15-kilometer buffer strip in the Jordan Valley. This openness with Governor Scranton leads us to believe that the plan, which was long unofficial, now has official status and may be put into effect one of these days.

6. South Korea

The parliament pulled itself together quickly, for a change, and gave bipartisan support to a \$3.6 million increase in the internal security budget. These funds are earmarked for improving home defense forces, which are playing a major role in rounding up armed infiltrators from the North.

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7. Czechoslovakia

Initial reports from the meeting of the Czechoslovak party central committee, which began yesterday, suggest that the Dubcek leadership is taking another verbal beating from conservatives. The Soviets are adding to the pressure by demanding that the central committee increase the authority of "reliable" Communists.

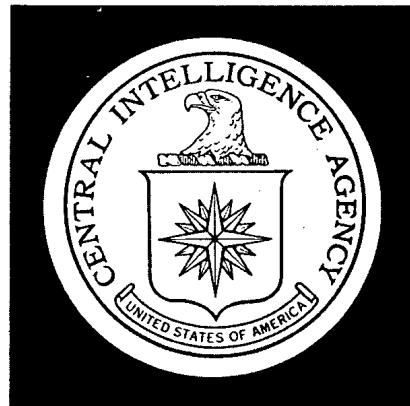
Whether or not such attacks lead to immediate changes among the party's key personnel, they surely will have a dampening effect on proposed economic reforms and government reorganizations, which are the main items on the agenda.

8. West Berlin

A Soviet diplomat has warned that there might be more stringent requirements on travel to West Berlin or new limitations on the Western allies' entry into East Berlin if the West Germans hold their Federal Assembly, which elects the next president, in the city. In telling this to the French, the Soviets seem to be hoping that Paris will help them to get Bonn to hold the election somewhere else. As of now, however, it looks as if Bonn is determined to go ahead early next year.

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- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of US Political Attitudes

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50X1

16

13 December 1968

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

13 December 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Appeals for Action in the South: The Communists have recently broadcast two strong appeals for support from key elements of South Vietnam's populace. On 12 December, Liberation Radio called on troops, police, and government workers to mutiny, conduct uprisings, or desert. Three days earlier, a Front broadcast strongly urged political activists, students, laborers, and intellectuals in the South's urban centers, particularly the Saigon-Cholon area, to gain control of wards and streets in the cities.

The Front has issued similar appeals periodically in the past, but these take on special significance because of the many signs that a sizable Communist military offensive may unfold soon in the III Corps area--perhaps even near Saigon--and probably elsewhere. Communist offensives are often accompanied by intensive efforts to undermine the morale of government forces and recruit new followers for the Communists. At present the Communists have the additional incentive of the Paris talks, where Communist negotiators need all the ammunition they can get to boost the prestige and status of the Front and denigrate the Saigon government.

* * *

Military Developments in North Vietnam: Recognizing the poor living standards of many military dependents in North Vietnam, Hanoi has tightened the regulations governing administration of dependents' benefits. Previous regulations authorized subsidies and preferential employment for military dependents but left to local units responsibility for providing assistance. Local control was probably necessary during the years of bombing because of transport and communications disruptions. A Council of Ministers' notice of 4 September pointed out, however, that local authorities and cooperatives were delinquent in

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this task, and that the needs of many dependent families were not met. These problems almost certainly have affected the morale of North Vietnamese soldiers.

The new regulations, which went into effect on 1 December, establish more central control over a nationwide subsidy system, thereby helping assure minimum living standards for military dependents. Specific financial allowances for wives, children, and other dependents are to replace previous provisions for "preferential treatment," jobs are to be found for employable dependents, and an education system for dependents is to be established. The Ministry of Internal Affairs is to enforce the subsidy program and oversee the living standards of servicemen's families, while the General Trade Union is to aid in providing jobs and educational benefits.

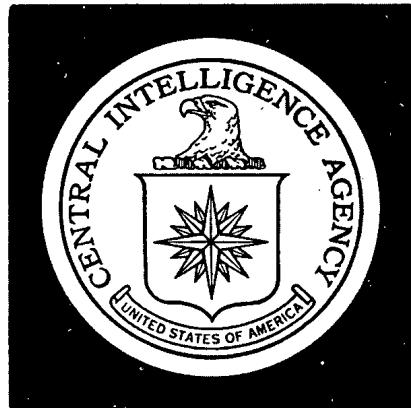
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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing of significance to report today.

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The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 14 December 1968



50X1

23

THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
14 DECEMBER 1968

1. Laos

At last report, intensive US air strikes had forced a sizable North Vietnamese force to retreat from the important government base at Ban Thateng. The North Vietnamese, whose strength was estimated at three battalions when the attack began, reportedly lost about a battalion during the fighting.

The successful defense of Thateng may ease some of the Vientiane government's jitters, but a recent prisoner report suggests that Saravane, the provincial capital, may soon be the target of an equally sharp Communist attack.

2. Brazil

Costa e Silva yesterday finally yielded to the generals and decreed the most severe repressive measures Brazil has seen in years. The legislature has been suspended indefinitely, some of its members will be expelled, and the powers of state and local governments have been sharply restricted.

We will probably see a roundup of the government's critics and the imposition of some press censorship. A good deal of militantly anti-Communist propaganda can also be expected from the hard-liners who are now in the saddle.

All this happened because Costa e Silva, under pressure from the military, had painted himself into a corner in an intrinsically unimportant dispute with the legislature. His own prestige has dropped sharply as his indecisiveness and dependence on the military became apparent. He may be nothing but a figurehead president from now on, and there is even a chance that he will eventually be eased out entirely.

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3. Okinawa

A demonstration protesting the presence of B-52s is scheduled today near Kadena Air Base. This is a popular issue, and the demonstration could be a big and boisterous one.

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4. Peru

General Montagne, who now is prime minister, minister of war, and head of the army, seems to be maneuvering to take over the presidency when Velasco retires from the army in January. Montagne leads the relatively moderate group in the cabinet

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Velasco is also trying to organize a civilian political party to support his efforts to retain the presidency.

5. Soviet Union

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6. Jarring Mission

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7. Communist China

The Chinese Communist Party's constitution is finally being updated. The buffeting of the Cultural Revolution having subsided somewhat, a draft revision is being circulated among the rank and file. They should quickly give it the required approval. The stage will then be set for the long-awaited ninth party congress, which must ratify the document before it becomes official.

The draft is both shorter and less precise than the present one. Among other things it provides for less frequent party congresses and for the "production," rather than the pseudo-election, of party officials. It also effectively confirms Lin Piao as Mao's successor.

The draft omits the strictures in the present constitution against disobeying party directives. Apparently, anyone disagreeing with a directive may appeal directly to the Central Committee and Chairman Mao. There is no requirement that he obey the directive while his appeal is pending. This loophole could be interpreted by dissidents as a sanction for continued insubordination.

For all its contradictions and vagueness, the document does represent a significant milestone for those who have been trying to get China back inside some kind of organizational framework.

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16

14 December 1968

50X1

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

14 December 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Liberation Front Delegation to Paris Via Peking:
The complete new Liberation Front negotiating team probably will be in Paris some time next week. The chief of the delegation, Tran Buu Kiem, accompanied by part of the team, is now en route with stopovers in Peking and probably Moscow.

Kiem's party received an impressive reception in Peking on 13 December, according to accounts broadcast by Radio Hanoi. It was welcomed at the airport by two Chinese vice ministers as well as the Soviet Embassy's first secretary. Later, Premier Chou En-Lai feted the group at a reception and dinner.

Radio Hanoi's accounts suggest that the Front's delegation received considerably more elaborate and effusive attention from the Chinese than their North Vietnamese counterparts. This appears to be in line with Peking's long-standing efforts to pump up the extent of its contacts and influence with the Front.

* * *

Armed Forces Exhortation on Anniversaries: In a broadcast designed for the edification of the party faithful, Hanoi Radio on 13 December called on its armed forces to celebrate the three upcoming holidays with special efforts to carry out the instructions of the Communist Party. The instructions call for honoring the achievements of the armed forces, exposing "the enemy's great failures and his new schemes," and understanding the "new step" in the party line. The broadcast enjoins the armed forces to remember that its role is to "fight the enemy" and that the war is by no means over for anyone. It suggests that a special campaign to indoctrinate forces in the "new situation" since the bombing halt and to head off any relaxation of effort will be mounted in the next few weeks.

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North Vietnamese Peasants Spend Too Little Time in Rice Fields: An 11 December newspaper editorial complains that "many cooperatives" have underutilized their members' time, and the short time spent in the rice fields has resulted in careless plowing, tardy transplanting, slow harvesting, and a late start on next spring's crop. Peasants are accused of spending too much time on their private plots to the detriment of the collective. The editorial advises cadres to "settle the relationship between collective and family economy" and "interest themselves in organizing their members' lives" to free them for work in the fields. North Vietnam has long had a manpower problem in rural areas, contributing to the steady decline in agricultural production since 1965.

* * *

First Foreign Merchant Ship to Vinh in Three Years: A Cypriot flag merchant vessel, under North Vietnamese charter, departed Haiphong for the port of Vinh on 8 December, according to an intercepted message. The ship will proceed from Vinh to Hong Kong where it is due to arrive between 18-20 December. This will be the first foreign flag ship to arrive in Vinh since the US bombing of North Vietnam began in 1965.

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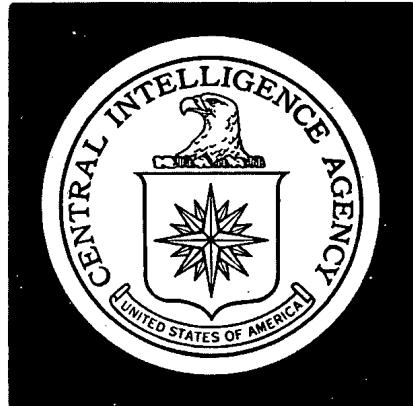
International Conference on Vietnam Off to Slow Start in Sweden: Press reports from Stockholm indicate the international conference, "Vietnam 1969--International Mobilization," sponsored by the Swedish Vietnam Committee and scheduled to run from 13-15 December, has attracted only about half the 300 delegates originally expected. Principal figures at the kickoff press conference on 12 December, at which nothing of significance developed, were the North Vietnamese Minister of Culture and the National Liberation Front representative in Rumania. The Swedish press has tended to ignore the meeting thus far. One of the major problems faced by the conference organizers is the continuing disagreement on tactics among various radical left and Vietnam peace groups in Stockholm.

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

There is nothing of significance to report today.

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The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 16 December 1968



50X1

THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
16 DECEMBER 1968

1. Laos

The struggle in southern Laos between North Vietnamese forces and Lao-tian Government troops for control of the strategic village of Ban Thateng continues despite the pounding the Communists have received during the past two weeks. Vientiane has flown in fresh troops and supplies to bolster its forces but they do not appear adequate to push out the well dug-in North Vietnamese battalion holding one section of the village. There are indications, moreover, that the North Vietnamese are bringing up reinforcements for yet another assault on government positions. Regardless of the final outcome, the battle of Thateng appears likely to be the costliest engagement the North Vietnamese have ever fought in Laos.

2. Brazil

No widespread overt opposition to the government's severe repressive measures has yet been reported, and we believe active resistance will be slow to develop. Opponents of the army are still being rounded up, and the government is acting to strip many of them of their political rights. Leading army generals appear to be firmly in the saddle and presumably are now directing government policy. What this will eventually mean for Costa e Silva's position is not yet clear, but he now appears to be a virtual prisoner of the army.

3. Panama

The National Guard appears to have carried out the occupation of the University of Panama on 14 December smoothly, efficiently, and without meeting any resistance. As partial justification for the action, the ruling junta has provided the press with a list of arms allegedly discovered in various parts of the university. The campus will remain closed for upwards of six months or until new legislation is passed permitting the school, in the words of the official communiqué, "to accomplish fully its lofty social commitments."

4. Thailand

Government forces are getting the worst of it as they try to stamp out insurgency in north-central Thailand. The tenacity, skill, and planning demonstrated by the Communist-led tribal insurgents suggest to us that veteran cadres, possibly coming from Laos, are leading the guerrillas. The present effort is the most successful launched by the Communists since insurgency broke out in Thailand four years ago and is having its psychological effect on the tribes in the area who are losing confidence in the government's ability to re-establish its control.

5. Dominican Republic

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6. Yugoslavia-Hungary

Arrival of a Hungarian Communist Party delegation to study economic reform measures in Belgrade is the first break in the almost total isolation of the Yugoslav party by the Warsaw Pact five since the Czechoslovak crisis. The visit could mark the beginning of a return to normalcy in relations between Tito and the Pact members, but it could also be primarily a solo fence-mending gesture by Kadar.

The Hungarians, mindful of their exposed position among potentially unfriendly states, have carefully avoided polemics with Yugoslavia during and following the Czech invasion. Kadar, moreover, has long prided himself on his ability to read smoke signals from Moscow and determine what actions are tolerable to the Kremlin. Whether he is a stalking horse for Moscow or acting on his own should become clear in the near future.

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50X1

16

16 December 1968

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

16 December 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

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North Vietnam to Release Captured American Pilots:
We have no information to add to the broadcasts from Hanoi and Moscow monitored on 14 December to the effect that an unspecified number of US pilots will be released for Christmas.

* * *

Hanoi Protests US Demilitarized Zone Activity:
The North Vietnamese Foreign Ministry has condemned "repeated encroachments" on the Demilitarized Zone

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by the US in a 14 December broadcast in English. The broadcast claimed the US had "wantonly" bombed and shelled many places in the Demilitarized Zone and sent troops into the southern half of the zone causing "heavy losses in lives and property" to the local population.

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Another 14 December Hanoi broadcast in English reported that North Vietnamese negotiator Ha Van Lau had protested to the US in Paris about the DMZ "encroachments," as well as US reconnaissance flights and "bombardments" in "many areas" of North Vietnam. Such broadcasts appear to be for the record rather than signaling any new moves by Hanoi.

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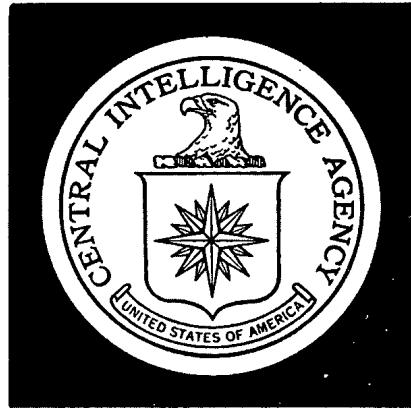
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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

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The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 17 December 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
17 DECEMBER 1968

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1. South Vietnam

Saigon officials are beginning to think that the "Chieu Hoi" (Open Arms) program for encouraging Viet Cong troops to come over to the government side is leading to increasing Communist infiltration of the military and civil service.

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2. Japan

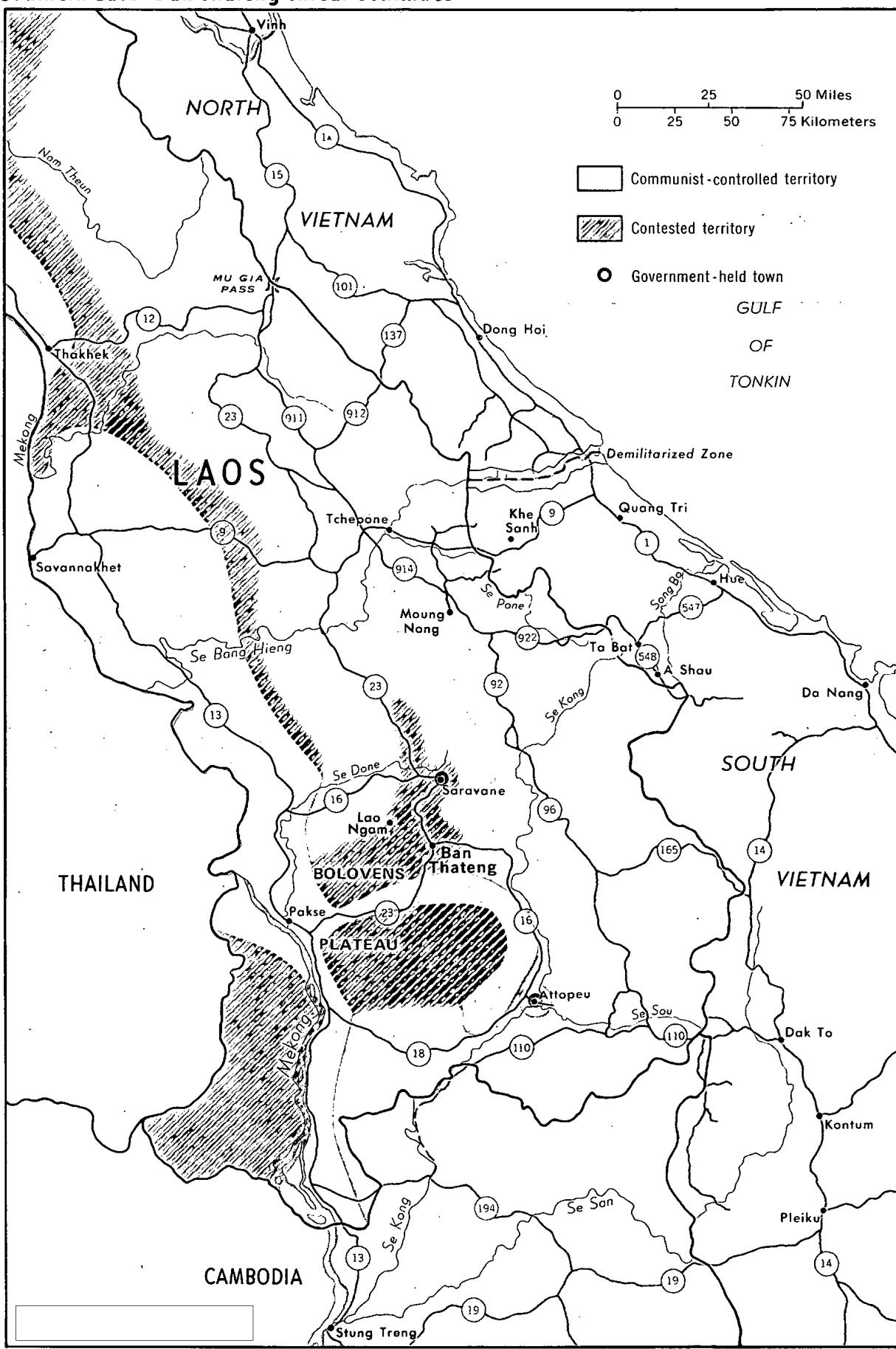
Communists, socialists, and other assorted leftists will charge up their political batteries again Wednesday, when another US nuclear submarine calls at the port of Sasebo. Police estimate that some 2,000 to 3,000 student activists will protest the three-day visit of the USS Plunger, but are confident that they can protect US property and personnel, even though violence is probably unavoidable.

A similar call last May by the nuclear submarine Swordfish led to false charges of radiation contamination of Sasebo harbor. Aware that these charges received a strong response from the Japanese public last time, the opposition is likely to replay them during the current session of the Diet.

3. France

De Gaulle's lieutenants are hinting that Franco-US relations could be improved if cooperation in nuclear defense could be established. The latest probe came from Defense Minister Messmer, who suggested to Ambassador Shriver that France would like to get the same access to US nuclear technology that the United Kingdom has had for some time. De Gaulle also wants the prestige that goes with a special nuclear relationship with the US, but so far there has not been a scintilla of evidence that he is willing to make any basic concessions to get it.

Southern Laos: Ban Thateng Threat Continues



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4. Laos

The North Vietnamese attack against Ban Thateng is almost certainly in reaction to an intensified program of interdiction against the infiltration corridor in Laos, part of which has been mounted by government forces from the Thateng area.

The vigor of the attack, however, raises the possibility that it is part of a wider campaign to take the entire Bolovens Plateau.

The situation in Thateng has already raised fears that the provincial capitals of Saravane and Attopeu will be next. King Savang

[redacted] is determined that the Bolovens Plateau must be held, and has authorized the bombing of Ban Thateng in an effort to dislodge the enemy.

Two more battalions of North Vietnamese troops are reported to have entered Ban Thateng during the night. They have reinforced the battalion which yesterday successfully beat off a government counter-attack. As of this morning, heavy fighting was under way.

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5. United Kingdom -
Nigeria

Even though General Gowon not unexpectedly rejected London's peace proposals last week, Prime Minister Wilson found himself strengthened in dealing with the opposition. He easily beat back an attempt in parliament to force a change in policy toward Nigeria. Wilson recognizes that this is probably just a breather, however, and is considering additional moves toward peace in Nigeria jointly with France, and perhaps the Ivory Coast.

6. Mexico

Politically inspired bombings and vandalism have intermittently punctuated the uneasy quiet which has prevailed since last Friday's antigovernment demonstration.

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Top Secret

50X1

16

17 December 1968

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

17 December 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Propaganda: Hanoi continues to attempt to gain propaganda advantage from the deadlock over procedural arrangements in Paris. In a communiqué issued over the weekend, the North Vietnamese charged that the US and Saigon are responsible for delays in opening new talks. The statement claimed that the Hanoi delegation, with the concurrence of the Front's team, has proposed "numerous judicious ideas" but all have been rejected by the US. The communiqué reported that Hanoi proposed on Friday that the four delegations arrange themselves as they wish around a circular table.

Meanwhile, the new chief of the Front's delegation, Tran Buu Kiem, and his party arrived in Paris on 16 December after a one-day stopover in Moscow. He stepped right into line with North Vietnamese propaganda by claiming the Front wanted the conference to start "as soon as possible despite the procrastination of the United States and the Saigon administration."

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Nothing More on US Pilot Release: We have no additional information regarding the alleged Radio Hanoi broadcasts on 14 December concerning the Christmas release of some US pilots.

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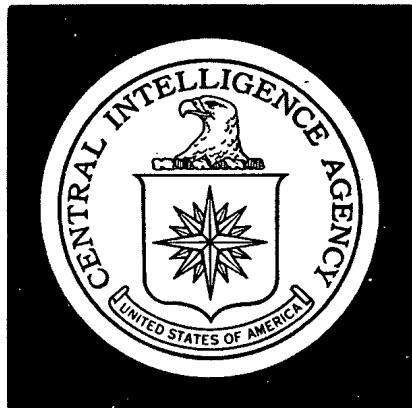
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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing of significance to report.

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The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 18 December 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
18 DECEMBER 1968

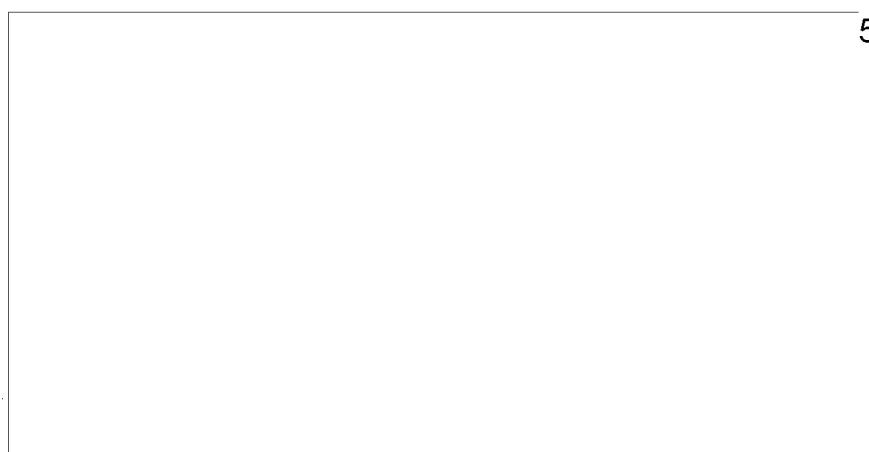
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1. South Vietnam



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2. France

We continue to see signs of a growing lack of confidence in the Gaullist regime. Many Frenchmen are skeptical of the country's economic future, especially since the financial crisis. The Czechoslovak affair is widely regarded as a setback for De Gaulle's detente effort. Students are still disorderly, and labor restive.

The government, however, has made clear it will deal harshly with any students who get really out of line. Labor leaders have called no strikes since early December--but may be harder to deal with this spring as rising prices and unemployment begin to pinch.

Another eruption is of course possible, but we think it more likely that antagonisms will simply continue to fester below the surface.

3. Brazil

An air of uncertainty prevails. Press censorship is keeping the public in the dark as to who has been arrested, and why.

The church is encouraging one of its liberal archbishops to speak out against the government, even if he lands in jail. The bishop in fact made a speech highly critical of the government on Sunday. An open challenge by the church might stir up the now intimidated students and labor--and probably goad the military into taking even more repressive measures.

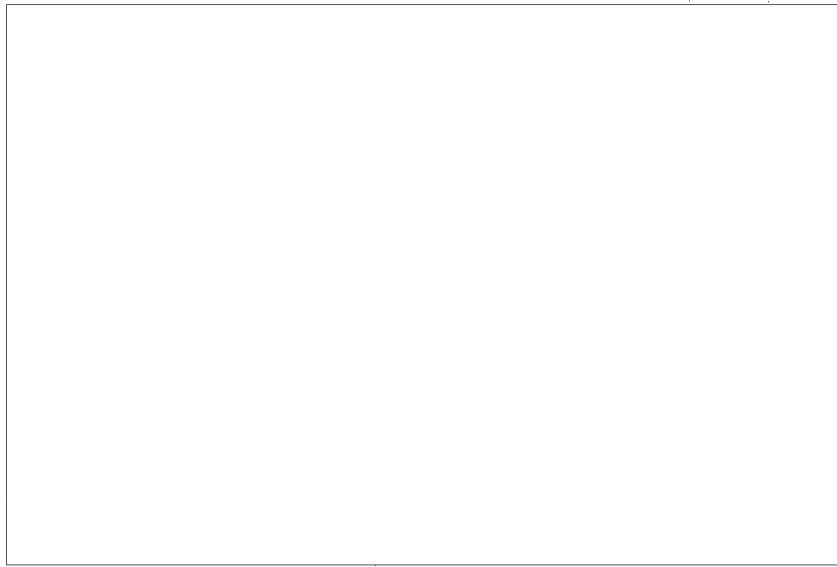
4. Laos

Ban Thateng is still in government hands despite new enemy assaults. Around-the-clock air strikes were instrumental in beating off yesterday's attack by a North Vietnamese force that may have included two fresh battalions.

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5. Israel

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**6. Soviet Union**

The Soviets' first solid propellant intercontinental ballistic missile--the SS-13--probably will be operational in about six months. There are indications that testing is entering an advanced stage, and satellite photography shows that the first of the new single silos being built for it will be complete by early 1969. Only 31 of the new silos have been detected since construction began in mid-1967--a much slower deployment rate than noted in earlier Soviet intercontinental ballistic missile programs.

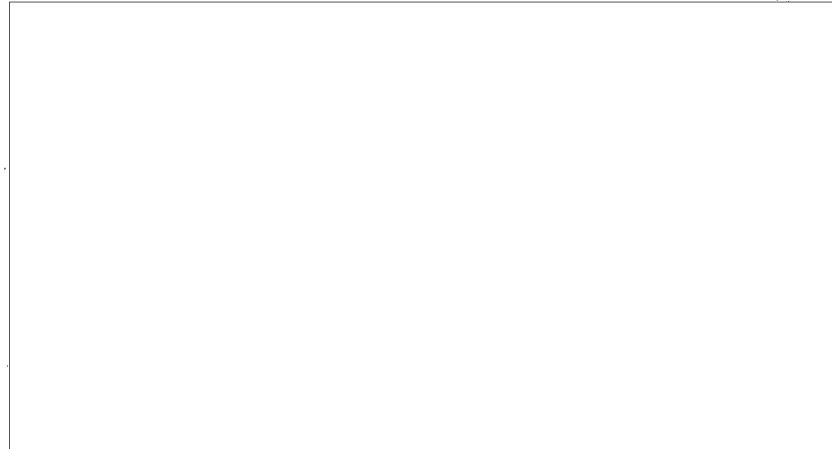
7. Guyana

Burnham appears to have won a clear majority in Monday's election and now, for the first time, can govern without the millstone of a coalition. The public, caught up in the traditional holiday revelries, is unlikely to care much about the charges of rigging from the opposition.

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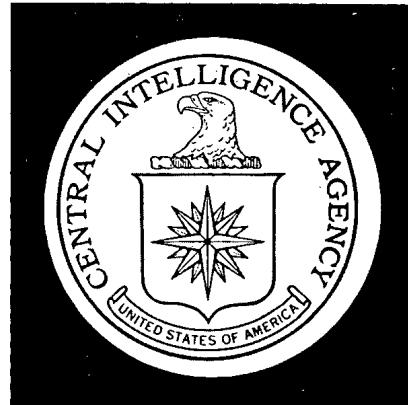
8. North Korea

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Political Attitudes

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50X1

17

18 December 1968

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

18 December 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Infiltration: Intercepted messages so far for December continue to show that about one new infiltrating group a day is entering the pipeline from North Vietnam.

Eight new groups have appeared in rear services messages since 10 December, bringing the total groups noted so far this month to 16. The average strength for each of these groups is about 570, bringing the month's total so far to at least 9,000 men. The majority of groups detected since late November is believed to be headed for the III Corps area of South Vietnam.

Travel of infiltration groups by truck and train in North Vietnam has resulted in a streamlining of the system of commo-liaison stations along the way. In the past, stations were strung out about a day's march from each other. Rear services communications for 15 December show that the number of way stations has been reduced.

* * *

On Prisoners: The North Vietnamese have not announced the Christmas release of some US pilots as reported earlier in broadcasts from Japan and Moscow. On 16 December, Radio Hanoi rebroadcast a statement first issued on the 13th that captured US pilots would be permitted to receive Christmas gifts. There was no mention of an impending pilot release. If such a gesture had been announced, Hanoi almost certainly would have repeated it during its broadcast on the 16th.

Hanoi still may release some of the pilots at a later date for propaganda advantage and as a gesture in connection with the Paris talks. The Communists probably believe, however, that general repatriation of prisoners will have to await agreement on the broader issues of a Vietnam settlement.

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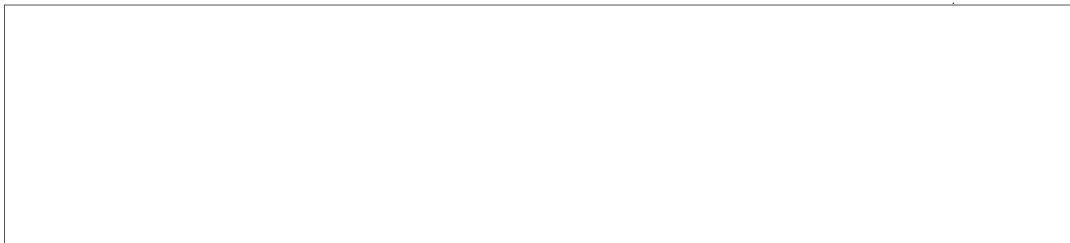
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Hanoi Hippies: Last week a North Vietnamese diplomat in Laos showed considerable--if confused--interest in the hippy phenomenon. He was talking to an American diplomat, and among the questions asked were the location of US "central hippy headquarters," who were the "top officers" in the American hippy movement, and through what channels they transmitted their commands. The North Vietnamese diplomat clearly did not believe the American when he explained that such organization was about the last thing hippies wanted.

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

There is nothing of significance to report to-day.

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The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 19 December 1968



50X1

23

THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
19 DECEMBER 1968

1. Cambodia

Press reports from Phnom Penh this morning state Sihanouk is "immediately" releasing the detained Americans. Sihanouk apparently made the announcement at a press conference.

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2. Communist China

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3. Soviet Union

Yesterday the Soviets made their fourth test of an ICBM with multiple re-entry vehicles.

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This system could be operational by late next year.

4. Soviet Union

For several years we have been watching a debate within the Soviet military over what sort of war would be fought in the 1970's and what weapons should be procured to fight it. This debate is reflected in articles written for military publications and it seems to be sharpening. We discuss the arguments today at Annex.

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5. South Korea

The army and militia are still hunting down surviving North Korean infiltrators who landed on the east coast in early November. Of the 90-120 North Koreans who landed, 76 have been killed and seven captured. The rest have broken into small bands or are moving individually

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6. Pakistan

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Right now the displeasure with Ayub's leadership does not seem to have reached dangerous proportions. We see, however, that Ayub has canceled his plans to attend the Commonwealth Conference in London.

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7. South Vietnam

The Viet Cong 9th Division is now moving toward Saigon from its base area on the Cambodian border. The 9th has played a key role in major offensive actions this year. Three prisoners from this division, captured near Saigon on Tuesday, claim the division will attack Tan Son Nhut air base.

8. Brazil

Communist terrorists seem undaunted by the government's harsh repression of recent days. The principal victims, in fact, have been non-Communist politicians and student leaders. Two terrorist bombings took place in Sao Paulo on Tuesday. If they continue, there is likely to be a violent reaction from security forces and right-wing militants.

ANNEX

Soviet Military Debates Forces for the 1970's

Soviet military leaders have been engaged for several years in a debate over strategy and force structure. The controversy has become more polemic during the past year. It focuses on questions of strategic offensive force levels, the antiballistic missile issue, and the need for more flexible conventional forces.

The debate, which is carried on in the military press, reflects the scramble between the services for resource priorities as planning for the 1970's goes forward. To a degree it may also reflect differences of views within the Ministry of Defense on the potential risks and advantages of pursuing arms limitation talks.

Except for those military leaders with clear vested interests, such as the commander of the Strategic Rocket Forces and the commander of Warsaw Pact forces, the statements of the majority of key officers in the high command have not demonstrated any clear-cut alignment of sides in the debate.

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The current round of the debate centers on the nature of modern war and its costs. Proponents of increased levels of offensive and defensive strategic forces argue from the theory that a future war would begin with a massive surprise attack by the US. They are pessimistic about the chances for advance warning and insist that the Soviet Union must strive for strategic superiority, both offensive and defensive, if it is to maintain an effective retaliatory capability.

Those advocating expansion of conventional capabilities contend that the Soviet force ought to be more flexibly geared to meet a broader spectrum of

military contingencies. This school of thought rejects the thesis that an East-West conflict would quickly escalate into an all-out nuclear exchange. Their argument currently seems to have gained ground within the Soviet military establishment.

The question of resource allocation, the second theme, has been raised beyond the perennial one of defense versus the rest of the economy. Within the military establishment it is now debated in terms of strategic versus conventional weaponry. The allocation discussion also implies that cost effectiveness considerations may now have some weight in selecting weapon systems.

The outcome of the debate remains uncertain. Both the General Staff publication Military Thought and the press organ of the military's Main Political Administration, Communist of the Armed Forces, carry articles reflecting many sides of these issues. It is clear the debate is going on at the highest levels of the Ministry of Defense.

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- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of US
Political Attitudes



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16

19 December 1968

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

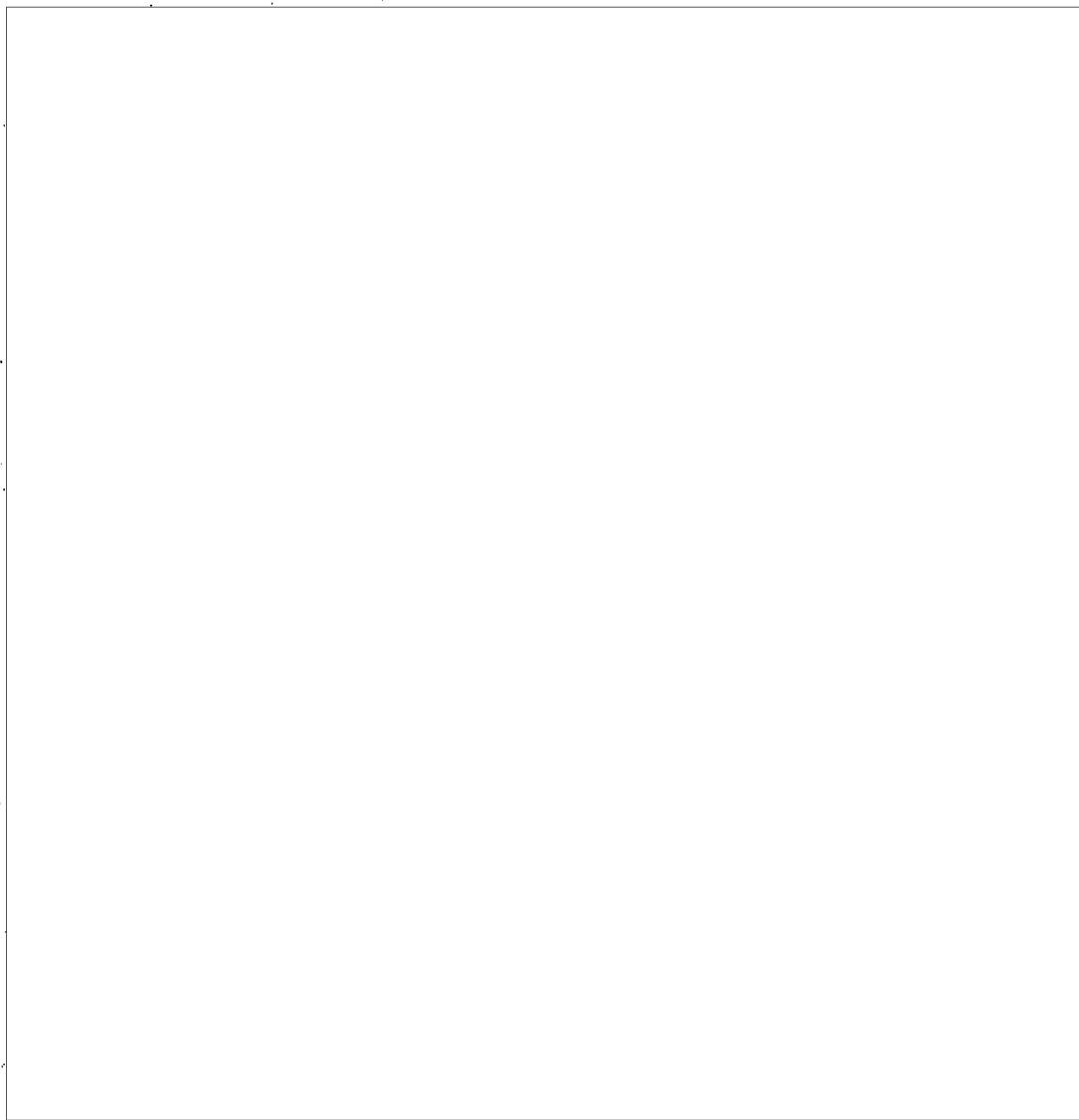
19 December 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

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Hanoi on Delays in Paris: Communist propaganda over allied "delaying tactics" in Paris is being stepped up. A "Commentator" article in the party daily Nhan Dan on 18 December pins full blame for the current impasse on Washington and warns that if the US wants to move "toward an honorable peace" it must stop delaying the talks and end its "war of aggression." The article is a straightforward presentation of the standard Communist line on developments of the past six weeks and contains no new emphasis or new language. It may signal, however, a

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greater effort by the Communists to exploit coordination problems and procedural differences on the allied side. Up until now, Hanoi's approach, while always couched in usual propaganda terms, has suggested that the Communists did not want the procedural hassle to be prolonged.

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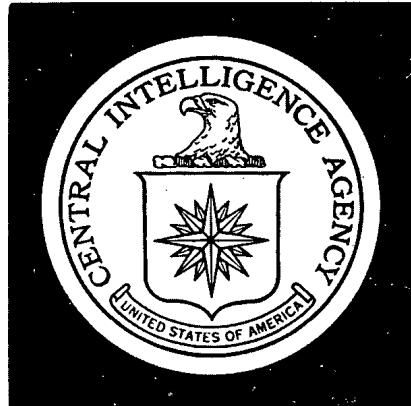
Hanoi Comments on Nixon Cabinet: North Vietnam's first public reaction to the Nixon administration's cabinet is bland and noncommittal. In a brief domestic service broadcast on the 16th, Radio Hanoi reported the names of the three top cabinet officers and then claimed that the composition of the cabinet was contrary to the president-elect's campaign promise that he would form a "coalition government" which included Democrats, women, and Negroes.

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

There is nothing of significance to report today.

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The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 20 December 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
20 DECEMBER 1968

1. Vietnam

Intercepted messages have revealed that the North Vietnamese are deploying up to company-size units back into the Demilitarized Zone. So far, enemy troops in the Zone have engaged mainly in patrol and reconnaissance activities, but the possibility exists that Hanoi is planning new offensive operations into areas immediately south of the Zone.

2. Egypt

As they did in 1968, Egyptian officials are again scurrying around trying to find for next year the two million tons of wheat the country needs to import annually. The French have contracted to supply about half a million tons of wheat flour by September of 1969. We believe the Soviets, who reluctantly supplied Nasir with over half his wheat imports in 1967, have again warned the Egyptians that they must look elsewhere next year for the great bulk of their wheat imports.

3. Laos

The government appears to have won, at least temporarily, the battle of Ban Thateng. Latest reports indicate the North Vietnamese, after suffering at least 300 killed, have withdrawn from the area. Laotian troops have reoccupied most of the town, meeting only occasional sniper fire. The victory will be a big morale booster for Souvanna's government and his troops. It should stiffen their resolve to hold other outposts likely to come under attack in the near future.

In the north, government forces have retaken Phou Pha Thi, the radar site overrun last March.

4. Soviet Union

[redacted] on 12 December during an antiballistic missile firing from the test site [redacted] (previously noted in the Brief for 12 December) suggests that the operation probably was connected with modification of the Galosh antiballistic missile. This is the system currently being installed around Moscow.

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50X1**5. Soviet Union - Common Market**

The Soviets are showing increasing interest in the European Common Market after years when they first ignored and then attacked it. For the second time in recent weeks, a Soviet diplomat has called on a Common Market official in Brussels and expressed concern that Soviet trade with the member countries would suffer as a result of Common Market commercial policies. We believe the Soviets, who have long opposed an increase in trade between Eastern European states and the Market, may hope to use these contacts in Brussels to keep tabs on dealings involving East Europe.

6. Peru

A government-sponsored mass demonstration protesting US action is slated for Lima tonight. The rally is designed to show popular support for Velasco in his current dispute with the US over compensation for Peru's expropriation of holdings of the International Petroleum Company. The US Embassy is only a short distance from the site of the demonstration and Peruvians, whipped into nationalistic frenzy by recent government propaganda and speakers at the rally, may prove to be more than the security forces can handle.

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7. Guinea

An army coup, similar to the one recently pulled off in Mali, may be in the works against Sékou Touré. Touré, obviously nervous over this possibility, recently called a mass meeting of troops in the Conakry area and promised he would make them "full participants" in his socialist revolution, whatever that means.

If coup plotting is under way, we believe it involves the older French-trained officers, who are appalled at the chaotic state of the economy and fearful that Touré means to dilute the army's military mission by assigning troops to civic action and economic development programs.

8. West Germany - Berlin

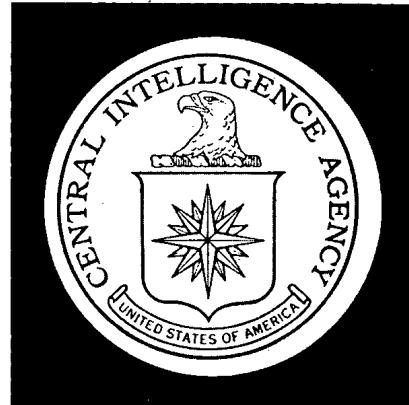
Bonn finally announced on 18 December that the West German presidential election will be held in Berlin in March. The consequent Soviet warnings have thus far been in low key. Even Pankow has confined its reaction to a veiled threat that East Germany might retaliate by tightening up travel restrictions.

Indicative of a generally relaxed Communist posture was Berlin Mayor Scheutz's unhampered auto trip from West Germany to Berlin on 19 December. Scheutz was turned back when he tried to make the same trip in April 1968.

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- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
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16

20 December 1968

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

20 December 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

US Prisoners in the North: [redacted]

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Hanoi plans to use

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US prisoners held in North Vietnam to obtain what
it wants on other matters. [redacted]

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[redacted] Hanoi would permit rela-
tives of the captives to visit them in North Viet-
nam if the Paris talks result in a "lessening of
hostilities."

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[redacted] North Vietnam holds more
than 500 US prisoners, including some captured in
South Vietnam. Many wounded prisoners have died,
[redacted] but they have been buried with proper
identification markers and their remains will be
sent home when the war is ended.

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While details of the [redacted] information may
be questionable, the North Vietnamese are quite pre-
pared to use US prisoners to make a political point
or two. It seems reasonable to expect further man-
euvers by Hanoi or the Liberation Front involving US
captives, including hints that relatives would be
permitted to enter North Vietnam or that additional
prisoners would be released.

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Repair of Bomb Damage in Hanoi: By 22 November
most of the damaged transportation facilities in the
Hanoi area had been repaired [redacted]

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[redacted] Repair and reconstruction work
on roads, rail lines, bridges, and canals began in
earnest in the late spring and early summer of this
year, presumably when the North Vietnamese became
convinced that the partial US bombing halt would be
prolonged. Restoration efforts were concentrated
on key bridges linking Hanoi with Haiphong and areas
to the south.

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[redacted] major damage to rail yards south of the capital in Gia Lam and Hai Duong had not been repaired. However, truck transport was used extensively in these areas. Rail yards and roads in the capital itself had never been seriously damaged.

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[redacted] destroyed or damaged buildings within Hanoi have been cleaned up to avoid the danger of collapse or falling debris, but most bombed-out areas remained vacant.

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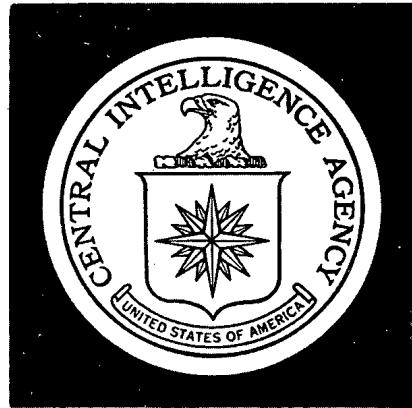
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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing of significance to report.

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The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 21 December 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
21 DECEMBER 1968

1. Brazil

The outlook for stability is getting bleaker.

Just what individual or group among the military leadership is running the government is not clear.

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there are at least three contending groups emerging among the generals.

Two groups, one relatively moderate, and one on the conservative side, apparently are trying to keep the extreme hard-liners from increasing their power through harsh new repressions.

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Some moderate officers are said to believe that the military's actions of the past week have united nearly all elements in the country against the government, leaving President Costa e Silva too narrow a power base to survive for long.

2. Argentina

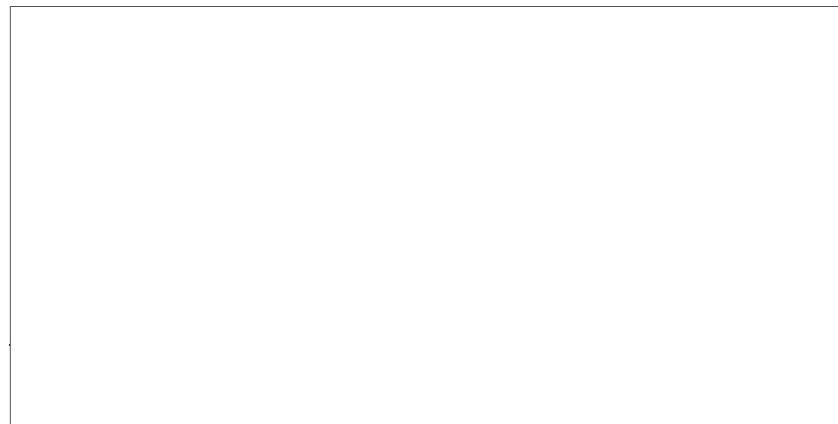
The navy has embarked on a program of expansion and modernization. Following the acquisition of a Dutch World War II - type aircraft carrier, the Argentines have announced purchase of two 1,100-ton submarines from West Germany. The next step is likely to be the acquisition of a modern English destroyer.

The procurement of such hardware could run afoul of the Conte-Long and Symington amendments and threaten the future of limited US technical aid to Argentina, with all the undesirable consequences to our relations this would entail.

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3. Peru

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The junta in Peru has recently established relations with Rumania and has announced its intention to open diplomatic ties with Yugoslavia. Lima has commercial relations with Czechoslovakia and has proposed reopening diplomatic contacts with Prague and Warsaw.

4. Laos

As reported in yesterday's Brief, Phou Pha Thi, the radar post lost to the enemy last March, was retaken on 19 December. The fight was a literal cliff-hanger.

Phou Pha Thi sits on a rugged mountain top on which the Communist defenders were well dug in, firing down point blank at Meo guerrilla attackers. When the attack stalled near the top, General Vang Pao, military leader of all the Meo irregulars in Laos, promised an instant field commission to anyone who would strap 20 hand grenades on himself and attack the enemy bunkers. He got two volunteers who climbed to the bunkers and silenced them. At that point, the main body of Meo charged for the top and chased the enemy off.

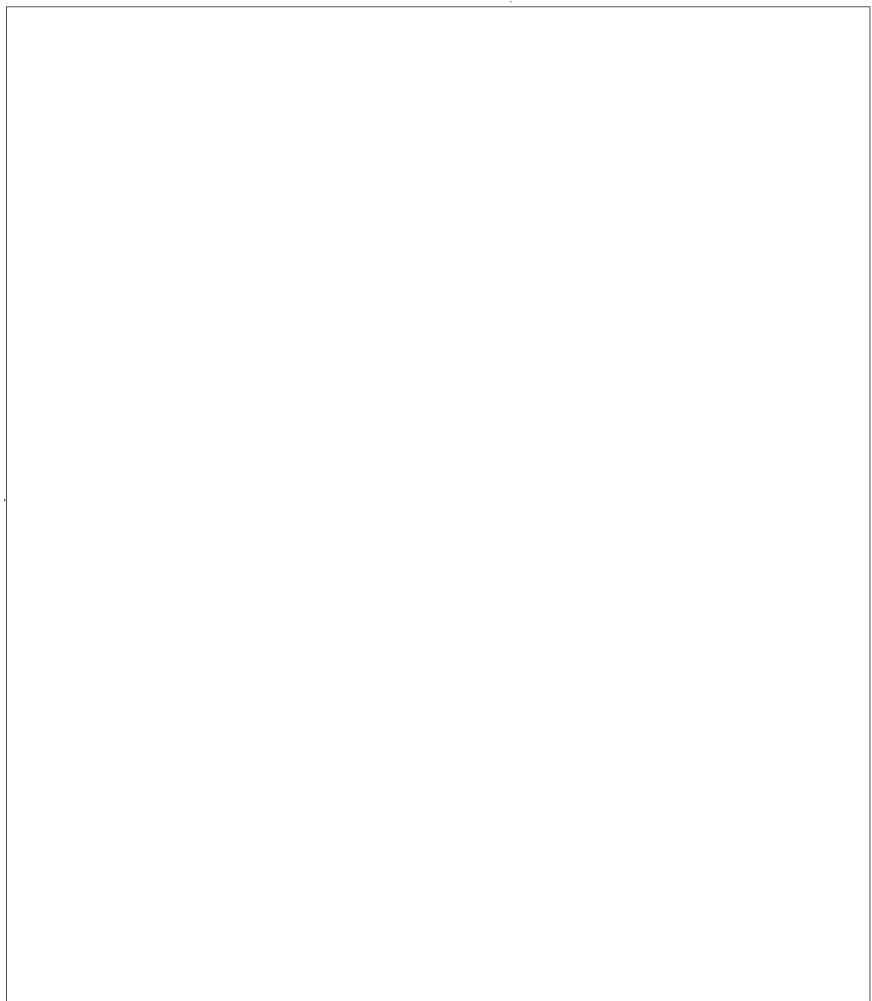
The Communists are moving reinforcements into the area, however, and the government's possession of Phou Pha Thi may be disputed again by next week.

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5. South Vietnam

A continued examination of intelligence bearing on Communist units in the Demilitarized Zone suggests that probably no more than two company-sized units are currently involved.

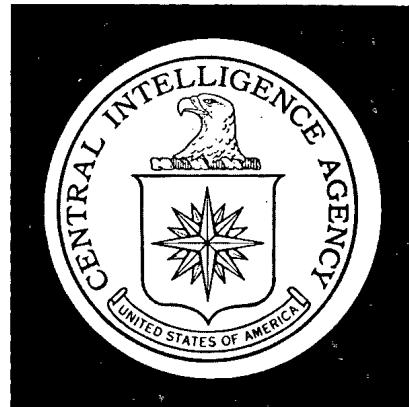
6. West Europe



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Political Attitudes

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50X1

16
21 December 1968

50X1

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

21 December 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

On Secretary Clifford: So far, Hanoi has not commented publicly on the Secretary's remarks. The Front did, however, on 19 December, but was unable to rationalize the possibility of differences between Washington and Saigon with the "US puppet" theme. The Front commentary chose to ignore that issue. Instead, it focused on other aspects of the Secretary's comments and used these as an excuse for the standard diatribe against US "aggression." The Secretary, in fact, was characterized as just another apologist for Saigon's obstructionism.

* * *

Front Anniversary Yesterday: The Communists are getting considerable political support from their allies on the occasion of the Liberation Front's 8th anniversary. The Vietnamese have publicized the event with important celebrations in both North and South Vietnam. In Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh himself turned out for the celebration. The main theme of the Vietnamese celebrations was determination to continue or even step up the fighting until the Americans withdraw.

Peking staged rallies and sent congratulatory messages with its usual militant warning that the Front could count on Chinese support so long as the Communists "persisted in a protracted war." The Soviet message of congratulations focused on supporting the Communist objectives at the peace talks.

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Vinh Airfield: There is now strong evidence that the Communists plan to conduct air operations from Vinh airfield in the near future.

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A conversation intercepted on 15 December mentioned the transfer of pilots and supplies to the airfield. The pilots had flown in the Vinh area previously and were to be sent to the airfield after completing their training. No date for their arrival was mentioned.

Five railroad cars were also scheduled to arrive at Vinh from Bai Thuong airfield, according to the same intercepted communication. The cars probably contain supplies to support eventual air operations and possibly materials for the reconstruction now apparently being undertaken at the airfield. Another recent message indicated that three North Vietnamese engineering companies are located there.

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Another Airfield Progressing: Photography of 9 December reveals that work is continuing at a fast clip on the new airfield located at Dong Suong some 16 miles southwest of Hanoi. Extensive portions of the 7,800-foot runway already have been graded, and a number of vehicle revetments have been completed. Construction began in early October.

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[redacted] Most of the traffic moving south out of Hanoi on Route 1A consisted of fuel trucks and trucks loaded with "large, black, cylindrical tanks." Coal was being

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shipped south by train. Increasing amounts of rough lumber used in the construction of concrete forms are also being transported into the city.

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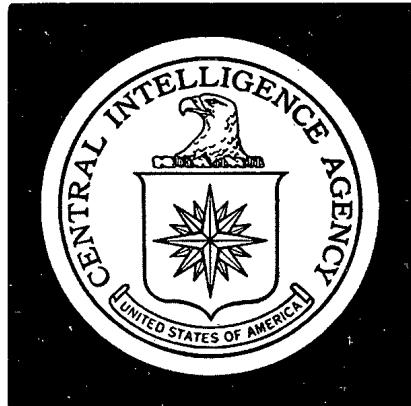
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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing of significance to report today.

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The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 23 December 1968



50X1

23

THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
23 DECEMBER 1968

1. Middle East

Gromyko arrived in Cairo Saturday on a visit that appears to have been set up on short notice. It is conceivable his mission is to obtain some token of flexibility from Nasir that Moscow can use in its effort to get bilateral US-Soviet talks on the Middle East.

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Recent Soviet initiatives on the Middle East have shown little that is new, although the Russians apparently have dropped their earlier idea of a four-power conference with the US, Soviet Union, France, and Great Britain participating.

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2. France

While the sobering effects of the franc crisis and Czechoslovakia have left France a somewhat less persistent burr under the West's saddle, there still is no give on basic De Gaulle concepts. British accession to the European Economic Community, for instance.

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Meanwhile, we continue to note signs of sagging confidence in the government. No French politician seems prepared to challenge De Gaulle directly

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3. Nigeria

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Ojukwu shows no inclination to give up, even though he has agreed to an eight-day truce covering Christmas and New Year's.

4. Korea

Predictably, the North Koreans have all their transmitters working on their version of the Pueblo crew release. Contributing to the broadcast noise out of Pyongyang this morning is a prerelease "press conference" with the crew, a "letter of gratitude" from it, a foreign ministry statement, transcripts of the US "apology," and a cascade of the venomous verbosity that passes for news commentary. Thus far the North Koreans have chosen to ignore the repudiation of the "confession."

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Top Secret 50X1

16

23 December 1968

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

23 December 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

50X1

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Relations With Prague Cool: A Czechoslovak [redacted] remarked [redacted] recently that relations between Hanoi and Prague were correct, but distinctly cool. The Czechoslovak said he had mentioned this to some Soviet colleagues and was told the North Vietnamese considered Czechoslovakia the "black sheep of the socialist camp." 50X1

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

Tho's Christmas Greetings: Nguyen Huu Tho, President of the National Liberation Front, has sent a Christmas and New Year's message to the "American people." In the text broadcast by Hanoi's international service on 21 December, Tho expressed thanks for "your big efforts aiming to stop the war of aggression by the US." Tho went on to predict success in "the great struggle against the US Government's aggressive policy. The legitimate interests of our two peoples and the interests of world peace will certainly win complete victory."

Top Secret



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 24 December 1968



50X1

THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
24 DECEMBER 1968

1. Turkey

Undaunted by their recent failure to organize anti-US and antigovernment demonstrations, leftist students will probably try again in the next few days.

This time they are planning to occupy, and possibly sabotage, a foreign-financed factory. [redacted]

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[redacted] near Istanbul. The students' plans call for a two-part campaign against foreign capital investment in Turkey. [redacted]

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[redacted]

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[redacted]

Phase two is only in the planning stage, but it is tentatively scheduled for March.

Since the Demirel government is probably aware of these plans, it should be able to cope with major demonstrations. Individual acts of sabotage, however, will be difficult to prevent.

2. Iraq

President Bakr's six-month-old revolutionary government is preparing to suppress another military coup attempt. The latest [redacted] rumblings indicate that middle-level officers are planning to take over the government within the next week or two and to turn it over to civilian control. The incumbents, however, seem to know about the plot and its chances for success are slim.

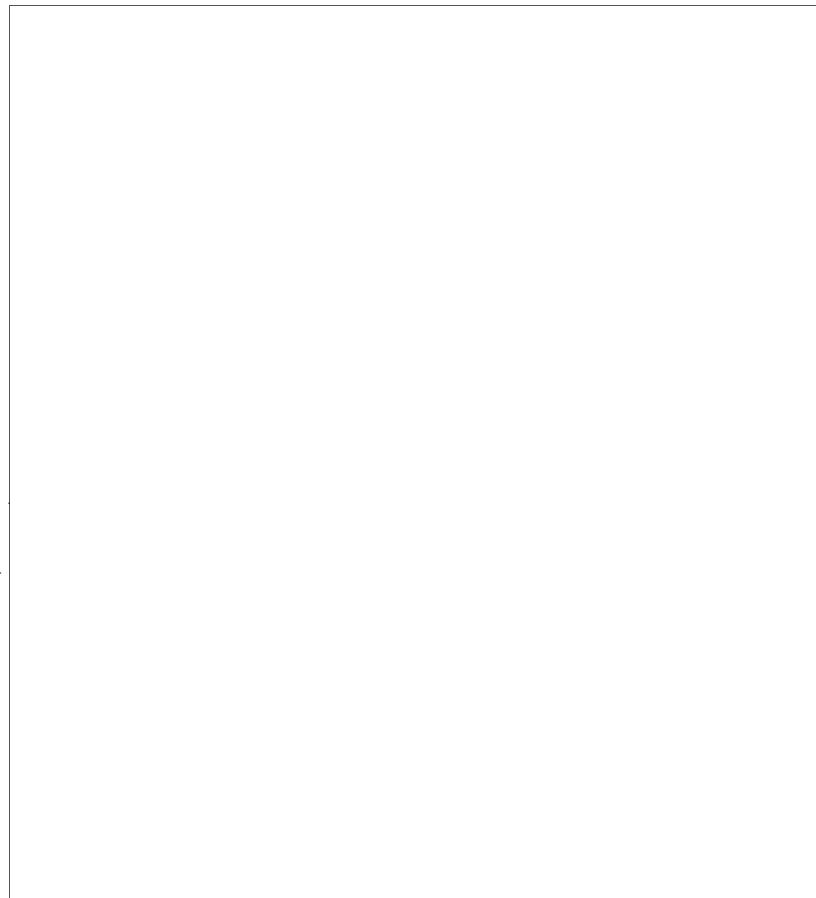
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3. Lebanon

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4. Nigeria

We doubt that federal troops will honor Biafra's declaration of an eight-day truce, which began at midnight local time on 23 December. Federal troops did not even observe a one-day truce they themselves had announced for last week, and there is no reason to think they will hold off during a second truce they have announced for Christmas.

The International Red Cross has managed to get a 15-day extension from the government of Equatorial Africa authorizing continued relief flights to Biafra. A new agreement on future flights must be worked out during that period.

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5. Czechoslovakia -
Soviet Union

Last week's trade agreement ties
the Czechoslovak economy more closely
to the Soviets.

According to the few details we
have, the agreement calls for more of
the same--expanded Soviet exports of
fuels, raw materials, food, and tech-
nology, in return for Czech manufac-
tures.

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Even though this agreement is somewhat
open-ended, we do not think it will be
an adequate substitute for the Western
technology which Prague had wanted.

These developments probably re-
inforce the growing impression within
Czechoslovakia that Dubcek is being
painted into a corner. In order to
maintain public order and control over
political developments, Dubcek has been
forced to warn that further "undemo-
cratic measures" might be necessary if
resistance to retrenchment is not ended.
Any such moves will cost him additional
support from the liberals, who up to
now have been his strongest backers.

6. Panama

The balance between the two lead-
ers of the military junta is beginning
to shift. Both men are still inter-
ested in maintaining unity, but compet-
ing National Guard factions are crystal-
lizing around them. If the rivalry be-
tween these factions becomes more in-
tense, there could be a falling out at
the top.

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16
24 December 1968

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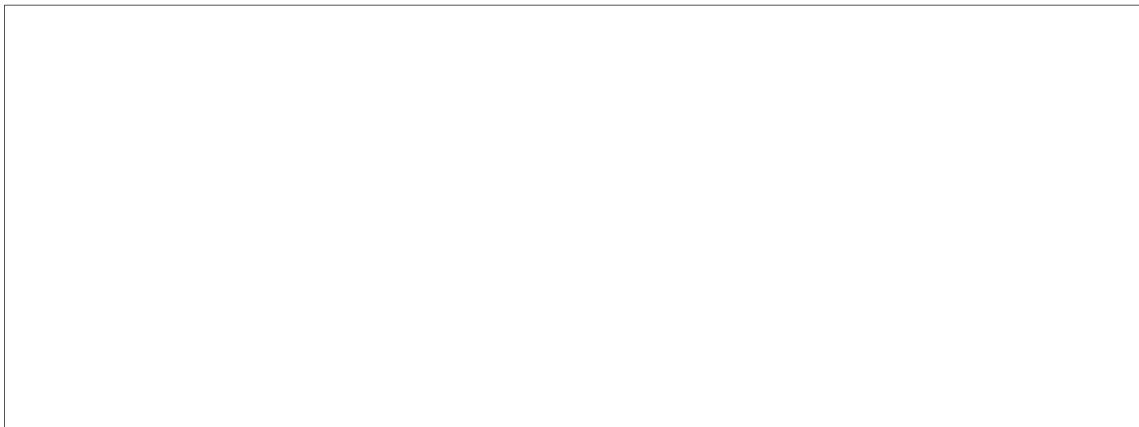
24 December 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

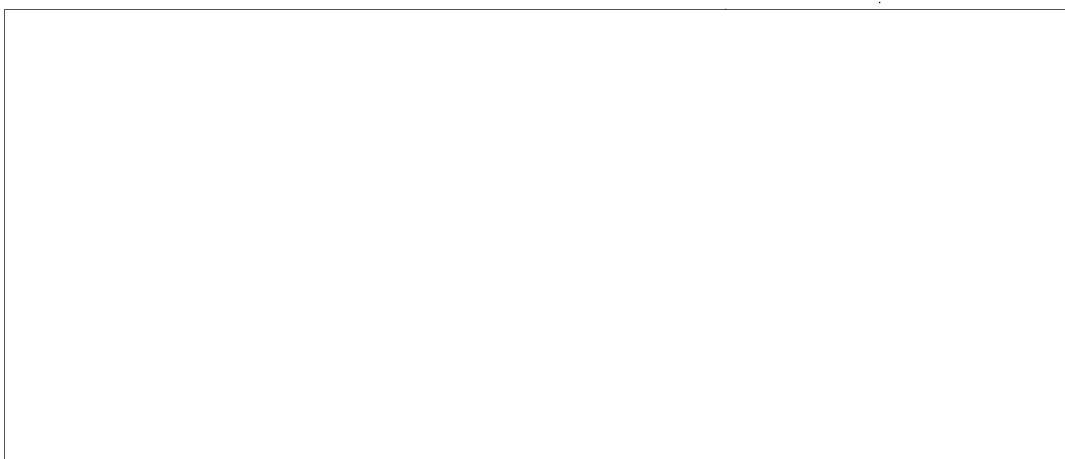
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Plans for Port Construction: Vice premier Le Thanh Nghi, in a recent speech broadcast over Hanoi Radio's domestic service, said that Haiphong harbor "must be enlarged." He also asserted that "other ports...are going to be built or enlarged."

Hon Gay, to the northeast of Haiphong, may be one of those slated for expansion.

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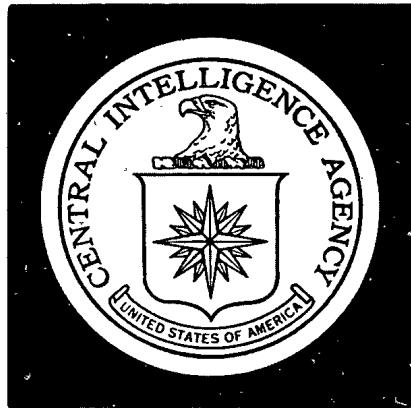
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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Hanoi Notes Criticism of Ky: Radio Hanoi, quoting Western news agency dispatches, on 22 December broadcast the derogatory comments made by Senators Young and McGovern about South Vietnamese Vice President Ky. The brief statement over Hanoi's international service also cited remarks by the senators that the US should begin a troop withdrawal as soon as possible.

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The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 26 December 1968



50X1

THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
26 DECEMBER 1968

1. Venezuela-Guyana

[redacted] the Venezuelan military is getting ready for an operation against a large section of Guyana that the Venezuelans have long coveted. The Venezuelan move reportedly would come in response to an "appeal" from the Indians who inhabit the area.

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The Guyanese do not have the means to resist a Venezuelan incursion. They probably would move as quickly as possible to secure UN condemnation of the "aggressors" in Caracas.

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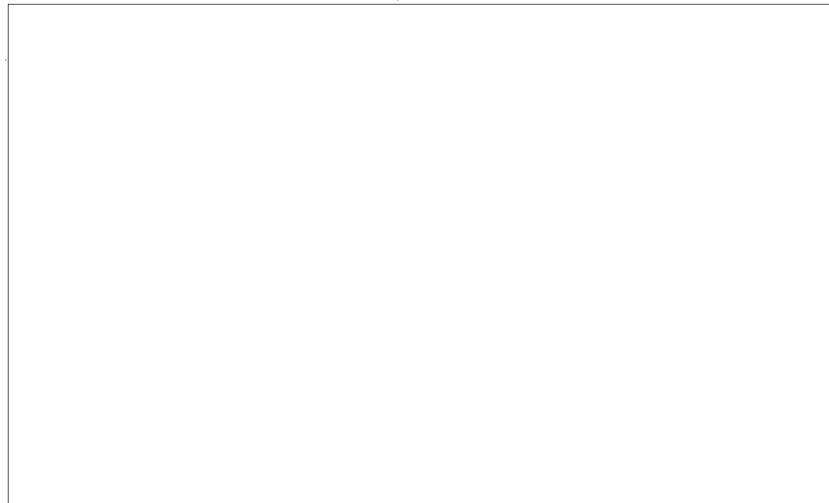
2. South Vietnam

[redacted]

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3. Soviet Union -
Middle East

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4. Italy -
Communist China

The new Italian Government has decided to recognize Peking in the fairly near future, according to Foreign Minister Nenni. The government will be implementing a decision which was announced in principle five years ago.

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Top Secret 50X1

16
26 December 1968

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

26 December 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Reaction to American and South Vietnamese Statements: There has been almost no authoritative Vietnamese Communist response to recent US and South Vietnamese statements about separating military and political problems in the course of negotiations and leaving the burden of a political settlement to Saigon and the Liberation Front. Hanoi probably is acting cautiously in part to avoid jeopardizing potentially useful openings for the negotiations. At the same time the Communists are well aware of the divisive influence some recent statements have had on the allied side, and they may feel that anything they say would only serve to close ranks between Saigon and Washington.

The only significant Communist reaction to Secretary Clifford's television remarks about mutual troop withdrawals on 15 December has been a Liberation Radio broadcast of 19 December. Avoiding the substance of the remarks, it simply castigated Clifford for using "shamelessly deceitful and provocative arguments." There has been no reporting in Communist media on Henry Kissinger's Foreign Affairs article concerning Vietnam. The French news agency reported that a Liberation Front spokesman in Paris on 19 December "rejected" the idea of separate negotiations on military problems between North Vietnam and the United States and political negotiations between Saigon and the Liberation Front, which had been "suggested successively" by Clifford and Kissinger. Hanoi's version of the Front spokesman's remarks omitted any reference to this subject.

Tran Buu Kiem, head of the Front delegation in Paris, "categorically rejected" Vice President Ky's statements on television last weekend, according to an "exclusive interview" by the French press agency. Kiem's interview has been quoted widely in the Western press, but its accuracy is at best dubious and

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the Communists clearly do not consider it an authoritative release. Kiem allegedly said, for instance, that the Front does not have the "direct means" to overthrow the Saigon government and that the Front would not be opposed to a "peace cabinet" headed by General "Big" Minh. These comments almost certainly are distorted and they cast doubt on the reliability of the rest of the interview. No Communist broadcasts have carried the statements attributed to Kiem, and none has so far responded to Ky's remarks on television.

This gingerly treatment of these issues almost certainly indicates considerable Hanoi interest. Some of the general ideas expressed by Secretary Clifford, Kissinger, and even Vice President Ky mesh fairly well with long-standing Communist scenarios for separate handling of problems concerning North and South Vietnam and for a political settlement "without outside interference." Many of the details in these statements are clearly unacceptable to the Communists, particularly Ky's suggestion of political negotiations after North Vietnamese troops have been withdrawn, but Hanoi probably sees in them at least some potential for future productive bargaining.

* * *

Giap's Address: General Vo Nguyen Giap delivered the keynote address at a major holiday rally in Hanoi on 21 December. The ceremonies, attended by Ho Chi Minh and other high officials, jointly celebrated the anniversaries of the establishment of the North Vietnamese Army in 1944 and the start of the anti-French resistance in 1946.

In his speech, as broadcast by Radio Hanoi's international service, Giap presented a generally optimistic review of the situation but without much of the bluster and exaggeration commonly used in Communist propaganda. This fairly low-key approach is Giap's trademark, but at this time it probably also reflects the leadership's sober assessment of Communist military prospects and the heavy reliance Hanoi is placing on its hopes that Washington is interested in negotiating an early reduction in the US commitment to the war.

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Giap argued that the bombing halt, and what he termed US reassessment of its position with a view toward "de-Americanizing" the war, clearly demonstrated that the Communists are prevailing. But, citing continued aerial reconnaissance over the North and a large military presence in the South as evidence of US intentions to hang on, Giap urged continued efforts to press forward along the lines of the party's "correct" revolutionary war strategy. He asserted that past successes stemmed from that strategy.

Giap described this strategy as "combining armed struggle with political struggle to launch... offensives in all forms," bringing to bear Communist "moral and political superiority" against US military and economic power. On the military front, the strategy calls for "stepped up big-unit fighting and ...widespread guerrilla warfare at the same time."

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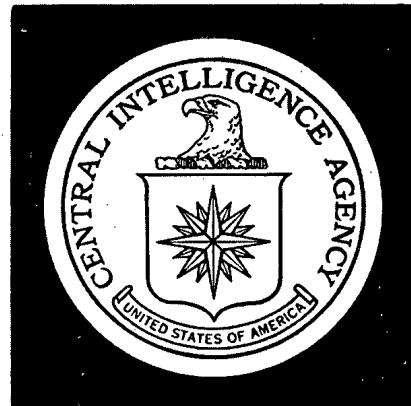
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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing of significance to report today.

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Top Secret



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 27 December 1968



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23

THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
27 DECEMBER 1968

1. Vietnam

Heavy Communist reinforcements appear to be headed for the two northernmost provinces of South Vietnam. A North Vietnamese division may be involved. Intercepted communications indicate elements of two, and probably three, regiments are moving south through southern North Vietnam and Laos. They seem to be coming around, rather than through, the Demilitarized Zone. Arrival of a new division would almost double enemy main force strength in this area.

2. EURATOM

For the first time, West Germany, Italy, and the Benelux members of EURATOM have ridden over French objections and agreed on a major research program without French participation.

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3. Japan

Normal operation of some 50 colleges is now impeded by disorders, and one university has been closed. The students are making demands, familiar from Berlin to Berkeley, for changes in educational policies and school administration. And, as elsewhere in the world, a small but vocal band of ultra-leftist radicals is spearheading the battle with the "establishment." So far, Sato has no solution, and growing public criticism could cost him politically.

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4. Nationalist China

There appears to be growing sentiment at top levels of government for reducing Nationalist China's oversized armed forces. Both Defense Minister Chiang Ching-kuo and the chief of the general staff are thinking in terms of cutting back the 600,000-man military establishment. (A reduction of 50,000 is one figure mentioned.) They face one big problem, however--Chiang Kai-shek. The elder Chiang, locked to his pledge to retake the mainland, would cast a cold eye indeed on any proposal to reduce armed strength.

Chiang Ching-kuo has implied on several recent occasions that he might be able to persuade his father to trim manpower if he got a US-supported equipment modernization program.

5. Middle East

Yesterday an Egyptian official briefed the US representative in Cairo on Gromyko's visit. The Egyptian said the Soviets would be contacting the US, probably with an updated version of the timetable proposal they made earlier. This was a scheme that would have both sides agree to a schedule of reciprocal actions leading finally to Israel: withdrawal and an Arab statement of non-belligerency.

The Egyptian also noted the Soviets had been fully briefed on recent US-Egyptian contacts and raised no objection. The Russians, in fact, had suggested such contacts be maintained.

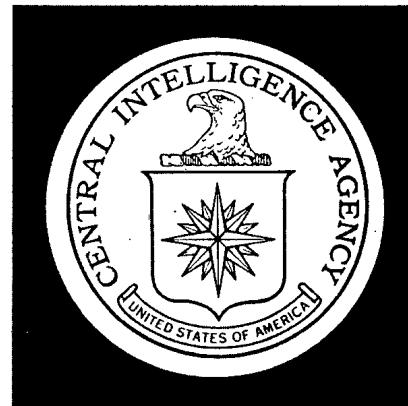
6. Italy

The Italians intend to sign the nonproliferation treaty soon, possibly within the next few weeks. Foreign Minister Nenni told Ambassador Ackley that the treaty was too important to delay despite the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of US Political Attitudes

Top Secret 50X1

16

27 December 1968

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

27 December 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

[] Observations from Hanoi: []

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[] picture of life in that city in early December.

Slow progress has been noted in efforts to clean up the debris in the streets of Hanoi, and attempts are being made to redecorate some of the buildings and shops in the center of the city. Some factories on the outskirts of Hanoi are being cleared of rubble and roofed and are then used to house light industries and as warehouses. Foxholes and shelters are being cleaned and repaired, and the latter are being painted.

Employees at a factory near the consulate general are continuing to receive regular training in drill, camouflage, and small arms, but [] the exercises as designed primarily to keep the population alert and active, rather than serving any real military role.

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[] air raid shelter construction continues, although apparently at a reduced level. Large-scale underground construction is under way at two sites in the city. A Vietnamese source is quoted as stating that many more deep and strong shelters are under construction but are not normally noticeable to persons above ground as access to them is from the inside of buildings.

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The economy continues plagued by a rice shortage. Beginning on 1 December, the proportion of cereal substitute (usually flour) in the rice ration was increased to 60 percent. Small bakeries have been

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opened in the center of Hanoi and machines installed for making the flour (which the Vietnamese do not know how to use in their homes) into a type of vermicelli.

Finally, a Soviet assistant military attaché has returned from a visit to the northern provinces complaining that he was obliged to obtain a pass from Chinese military officials to travel in certain areas. The Soviet officer also reported that during the course of his tour, he was stopped several times for his pass to be checked by Chinese soldiers.

* * *

Haiphong Conditions: A picture of jumbled piles of goods in the streets is provided by another recent eye-witness account of a visit to North Vietnam's biggest port. The source [redacted] was in Haiphong early this month. He described an incredible collection of supplies stacked everywhere.

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"The entire city is crowded with storage vans, crates, and open piles of equipment. Beginning at the entrance to the main port area, and reaching out to the suburbs, every street is jammed with equipment which has been unloaded at the port."

The source remarked that the city looked like one vast storage depot. There have been numerous reports from a variety of sources describing much the same scene.

* * *

Logistic Activity Continues to Increase: A high level of logistic activity continued in southern North Vietnam during the past week. [redacted]

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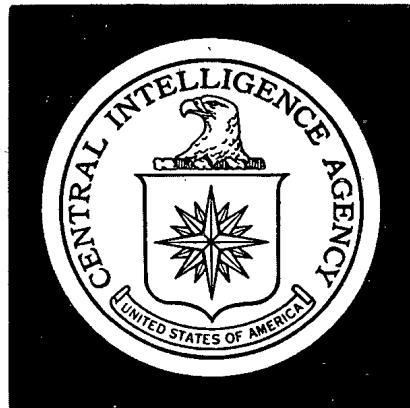
Road-watch teams near Mu Gia Pass [redacted] during December have indicated a sharp seasonal rise in Lao-tian trucking, but nothing like the increased logistic effort in southern North Vietnam since the bombing halt in November.

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

There is nothing of significance to report today.

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The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 28 December 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
28 DECEMBER 1968

1. Vietnam

Early this morning, Washington time, Radio Liberation broadcast a Viet Cong proposal for another meeting on 1 January between US and Viet Cong officers to discuss "preparatory procedures" for the release of the three American prisoners. The broadcast called for the meeting to be held at Tay Ninh--site of the unproductive encounter on 25 December. One of the conditions imposed for meeting with the American representatives is acceptance by the US and South Vietnam of the cease-fire ordered by the National Liberation Front for New Year's Day.

2. West Germany

Bonn says it wants in, if the Eighteen Nation Disarmament Conference is to be enlarged. The West Germans appear to recognize that they will have to pay a price for membership and are willing to discuss possible concessions--probably up to but not including East German membership--with Moscow.

This is the latest indication of Bonn's intention to expand its activities in the field of international security. The West Germans were prime movers in the recent Non-nuclear Nations Conference and have sought to be included on the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The whole issue of membership on an expanded disarmament conference is a sensitive one in West Germany as in other West European countries where considerable resentment has arisen over the recent US move to add six members from regions of the world other than Western Europe. The West Germans, the Dutch, and others feel their region is already under-represented on that body.

3. Venezuela-Guyana

The Venezuelan foreign minister has assured our ambassador that Venezuela's armed forces will not become involved in internal problems in Guyana. The foreign minister, however, indicated that Caracas would not be surprised if troubles do break out among the Indians in the disputed western region of Guyana.

Although Caracas may not stop all covert efforts to stimulate an internal revolt against Burnham, the assurances we have received from the foreign minister should take much of the heat out of the crisis. It greatly reduces the probability that Venezuelan troops will be used in open support of any rebellion.

4. Peru

The government is seeking to exploit nationalist sentiment throughout Latin America in its continuing controversy with Washington over refusal to pay for expropriated holdings of the International Petroleum Company. The obvious aim of efforts by Lima to secure public and official support is to put pressure on the US to prevent imposition of economic sanctions. While we would expect most Latin American governments to try to steer clear of the dispute, some may find it politically expedient to give at least nominal support to Peru.

5. Pakistan

Ayub could be in for serious new disturbances following the shooting death of a student demonstrator in Rawalpindi on 25 December. The nationwide demonstrations of the past seven weeks were set off originally by the police killing of a student during a protest meeting in the same city.

6. Communist China

On the basis of preliminary analysis, we believe China's eighth nuclear test, conducted at Lop Nor on 27 December, was an airdropped thermonuclear device with a yield of about three megatons. This is the fifth time that a thermonuclear device has been tested, evidence of the primary emphasis Peking has placed on thermonuclear technology in its nuclear weapons program. This is also the first test to take place since China's only failure in the series on 24 December 1967.

7. Okinawa

The recently elected Okinawan legislature has unanimously passed resolutions protesting the continued presence of B-52s and visits to the island by nuclear submarines. Since the B-52 crash in November, all Okinawan political parties have been careful not to be left behind on such popular emotional issues. The conservatives, however, have frequently acted as a brake on the other parties and were responsible for moderating the substance of the resolution on the B-52s.

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50X1

16

28 December 1968

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

28 December 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

On US Warnings in Paris: The Front's initial comments on Ambassador Vance's 19 December admonition to Ha Van Lau regarding Communist attacks against cities were similar to an earlier North Vietnamese dispatch and contained several standard Communist retorts. In a Liberation Radio broadcast on 25 December, the Front insisted on the right to unrestricted military activity in the South in response to continued allied tactical operations. It added it had the "right" to resist "aggression" until the "aggressors" are driven out of Vietnam. The Front charged that Vance's statements were motivated by an allied fear of Communist military power. Serious talks in Paris can be carried out best, the broadcast repeated, when the current Saigon government is overthrown.

* * *

More on Prisoners: The Communists probably intend to step up pressure on the US regarding the transfer of three US prisoners back to US control. A Liberation Radio broadcast on 27 December claimed that the meeting on Christmas Day between US and Viet Cong representatives was unproductive because US representatives refused to discuss "procedural matters." The Communists are well aware that the issue of prisoners is an emotional one for the US and they hope this factor will lead the US to accept otherwise unpalatable dealings with the Liberation Front.

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Bo to Bern: [redacted]
Hanoi's representative in Paris, Mai Van Bo, is conferring with Swiss Government officials. [redacted]

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[Redacted]

It is doubtful that the North Vietnamese are actively considering enlarging the peace talks at this time. Hanoi spokesmen have been consistently and reliably reported as opposed to bringing in either Peking or Moscow at this stage of negotiations. There have been reports that the North Vietnamese might be interested in a full-blown international conference as a sort of guarantor of an agreement which had been worked out directly with the US, but this is pretty far down the road, and it seems unlikely that Mai Van Bo is working on arrangements of this type at this time.

Bo has been sent to Bern in the past, however, to promote Swiss diplomatic recognition of North Vietnam, and he may well be on a similar mission now. Hanoi is currently putting special emphasis on increasing its diplomatic ties especially in Western Europe.

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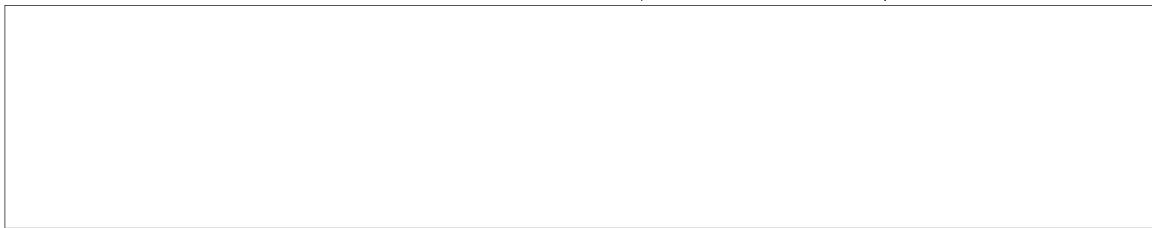
Hon Gai-Kep Rail Line Progresses: Photography of 13 December reveals that since 30 September the Communists have laid about 15 miles of new track and finished a five-span rail bridge on the eastern section of the new rail line being built from Hon Gai to Kep. Only a five-mile gap and one multispan bridge need to be finished to open the eastern half of the line to traffic. Construction on the entire 66-mile line was resumed in October after a three-month lull probably caused by the extensive flooding of last summer.

When completed, the line will connect North Vietnam's major industrial centers with the primary coal producing and secondary port area of Hon Gai. In a recent speech, Vice Premier Le Ghan Nghi mentioned that North Vietnamese ports other than Haiphong will be built or expanded. He probably had Hon Gai in mind.

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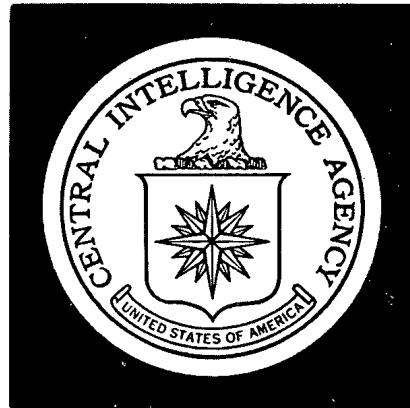
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**II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL
ATTITUDES ON THE WAR**

There is nothing of significance to report today.

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The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 30 December 1968



50X1

THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
30 DECEMBER 1968

1. South Vietnam

Ky's return to Paris may be de-
layed.

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It seems unlikely that Ky has
given up altogether

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It [] is pos-
sible that Ky, with Thieu's agreement,
may have decided to wait out the last
days of the Johnson administration in
Saigon.

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2. Portugal

In the press conference Friday,
in which he announced Portugal's ready-
ness to reopen the Azores base negoti-
ations, Foreign Minister Franco Nogueira
claimed that Lisbon has a "right to de-
mand that others cooperate" with Portu-
gal's African policies. This is the
most explicit warning yet that the Por-
tuguese will be trying to use the Azores
base as a lever to get US backing for
their activities in Africa. Our embassy
believes that the Portuguese think
world opinion in general--and the views
of the new US administration in particu-
lar--will be more sympathetic to them
in the future.

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3. Brazil

The Brazilian National Security Council has scheduled one of its rare meetings for today. Normally the council meets only to ratify decisions made by the executive.

We know that Costa e Silva has been under pressure from many sides to get off the dime and do something, but we have no word on what the council will be asked to approve. Today's meeting should provide a clearer view of the relative strength of the various groups competing for influence and whether Costa e Silva is being pushed another step toward undisguised military dictatorship.

4. Arab States - Israel

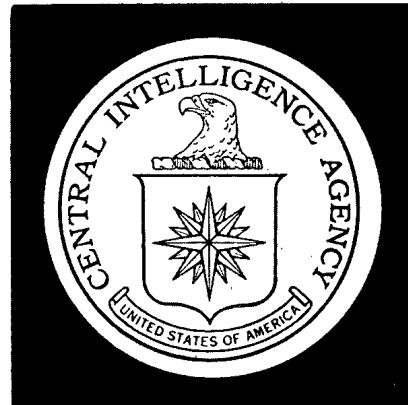
The Israeli raid on Beirut airport may produce more Lebanese-based terrorist activity rather than less. The Lebanese populace is in an ugly mood, and the government--which lacks the means to attack Israel directly--will probably relieve its frustration by halting its efforts to rein in the local terrorists.

Harsh reactions can be expected elsewhere in the Arab world as well. The US, with the announcement of the sale of Phantoms fresh in Arab memories, will come in for a good part of the blame for the Israeli reprisal.

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- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of US Political Attitudes

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50X1

16
- 30 December 1968

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

30 December 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Hanoi Speeds Packages to US POWs:

[redacted] Hanoi is following through on its announcement that US prisoners in North Vietnam could receive Christmas packages this year.

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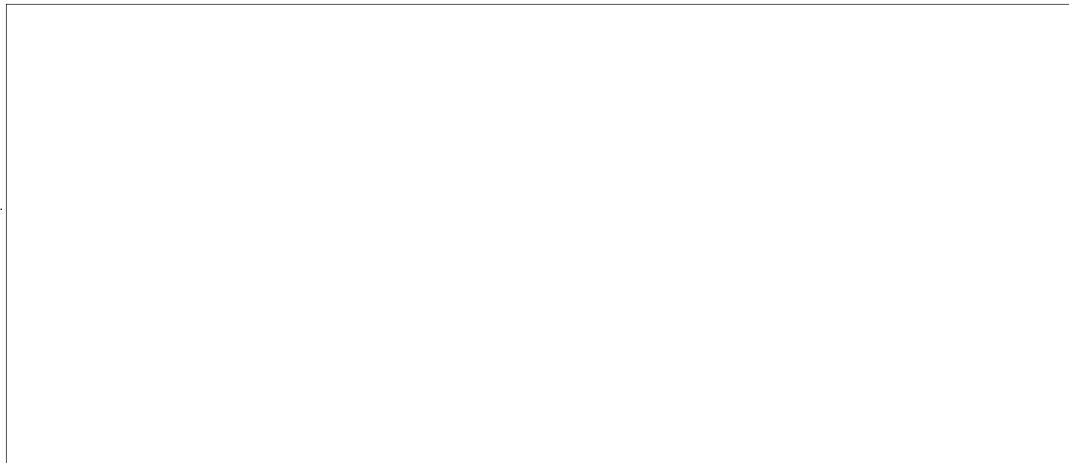
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Liberation Front Man Sees Debré: The 26 December call on Foreign Minister Debré by Tran Buu Kiem, chief Liberation Front delegate in Paris, was mainly a "courtesy" visit, according to a French Foreign Ministry official. He described the call as in keeping with France's policy of according equal treatment to all four delegations to the talks in Paris. Though plausible and correct in terms of protocol, this position obviously suits the Communists and feeds South Vietnamese fears about French intentions.

Tran Buu Kiem evidently made a standard propaganda pitch during the visit with Debré, including the stress on the need for a "peace cabinet" in Saigon pending the establishment of a coalition government. He would not be drawn out on what personalities or political elements would be acceptable to the Communists, but insisted that President Thieu, Vice President Ky, and Prime Minister Huong must all be removed.

The French official relaying this to a US Embassy officer said that press reports about Debré telling Kiem that France was prepared to aid in postwar reconstruction in Vietnam should not be construed as a substantive commitment to the Communists. He described them as remarks made out of courtesy which parallel similar assurances to the US.

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Repairs to North Vietnamese Power Plants: The North Vietnamese have made extensive repairs to three of their major thermal power plants.

Construction efforts at the Hanoi Thermal Power Plant are apparently intended to provide protection from air strikes.

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Similar construction is under way at the Haiphong Thermal Power Plant West.

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The Thanh Hoa Thermal Power Plant, heavily damaged by air strikes, is being restored.

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Transportation in Hanoi-Haiphong Area: [redacted] 50X1
[redacted] in Hanoi reports all damage to major rail
lines in the Hanoi-Haiphong area has been repaired.
Work is going forward on an alternate railroad be-
tween Hanoi and the port city [redacted]. 50X1

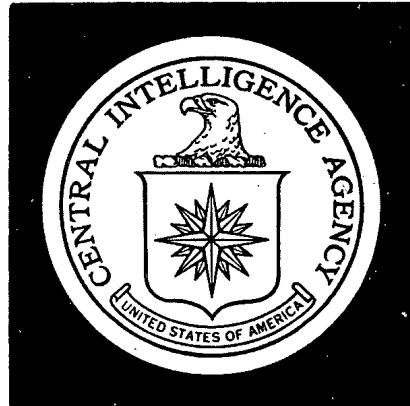
Rail traffic in and out of Hanoi is heavy and
mostly freight. Some damaged equipment is coming up
from the south, however. Highways are being resur-
faced [redacted] and many new trucks are to be seen. 50X1

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

There is nothing of significance to report today.

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The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 31 December 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
31 DECEMBER 1968

1. Israel-Lebanon

The main Arab terrorist organization, Fatah, has announced it will launch a "rain" of revenge raids in retaliation for the Israeli strike at Beirut. We believe there may well be a new burst of terrorist attacks.

Nasir, who must feel his image is slipping badly, may decide that Egypt must make a dramatic retaliatory attack. His one outstanding success was the sinking of the Israeli destroyer Eilat in October 1967. Israeli shipping in the Mediterranean or the Red Sea is an inviting target. A foray against Israeli positions across the Suez Canal can also be launched with little preparation. The Soviet Union, if consulted, would probably oppose such action.

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[redacted] Israeli reaction would certainly be heavy in any event.

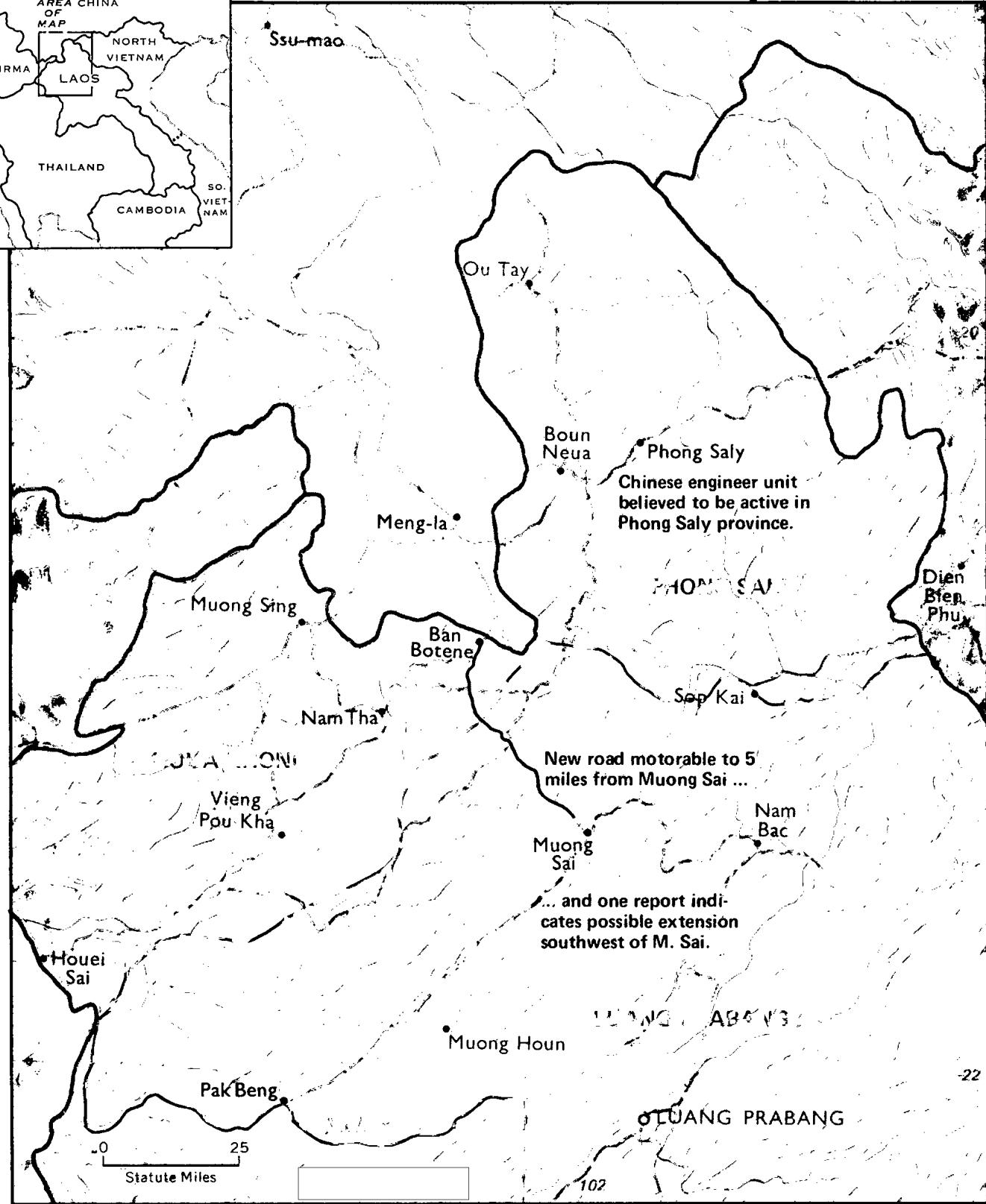
World press and diplomatic reaction to the Beirut attack continues to be almost entirely sympathetic to Lebanon. Even some Israeli newspapers are beginning to question the wisdom of Friday's raid.

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The Security Council recessed early this morning, still without action on Lebanon's complaint. It will reconvene at 3:00 PM EST.

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Chinese Push Ahead With Laos Road Building



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2. Laos

Chinese Communist army engineers are pushing ahead with road construction in two areas of northern Laos. One section of road is now completed to within five miles of the Communist stronghold of Muong Sai. Work also is progressing on sections of road in Phong Saly Province further north. These roads will considerably help the resupply of Communist garrisons in the area.

Chinese engineers bring their own security units with them and there may be as many as 3,000 to 5,000 Chinese in northern Laos.

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North Vietnamese troops have returned to the offensive in both north and south Laos. Attopeu, a provincial capital in the south, is the scene of some particularly active skirmishing.

3. Central America

Economic integration is still a distant smudge on the horizon as disputes continue to plague the Central American Common Market. Currently, Nicaragua's Somoza is irked by his Market partners--Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala--where congressional roadblocking has prevented passage of economic legislation. Somoza, in fact, has threatened to pull out altogether. This probably is bluff, but it is symptomatic. The prognosis for improved cooperation is not bright.

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4. Tunisia

Another first for Apollo-8: President Bourguiba, who has never before been known to touch alcohol, toasted the Apollo crew with champagne. The occasion was a dinner Bourguiba gave senior American diplomats to celebrate Apollo's historic flight.

5. Belgium

King Baudouin is showing signs of becoming a more forceful element in Belgian politics. Heretofore the King has been quite willing to stay in showcase status, but in recent months he has taken a stand on several major issues including the linguistic dispute which keeps Flemish and Walloon speaking Belgians perennially at each other's throats. Last fall the King also lobbied with his principal ministers for an increase in Belgium's NATO forces.

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Top Secret 50X1

16
31 December 1968

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

31 December 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

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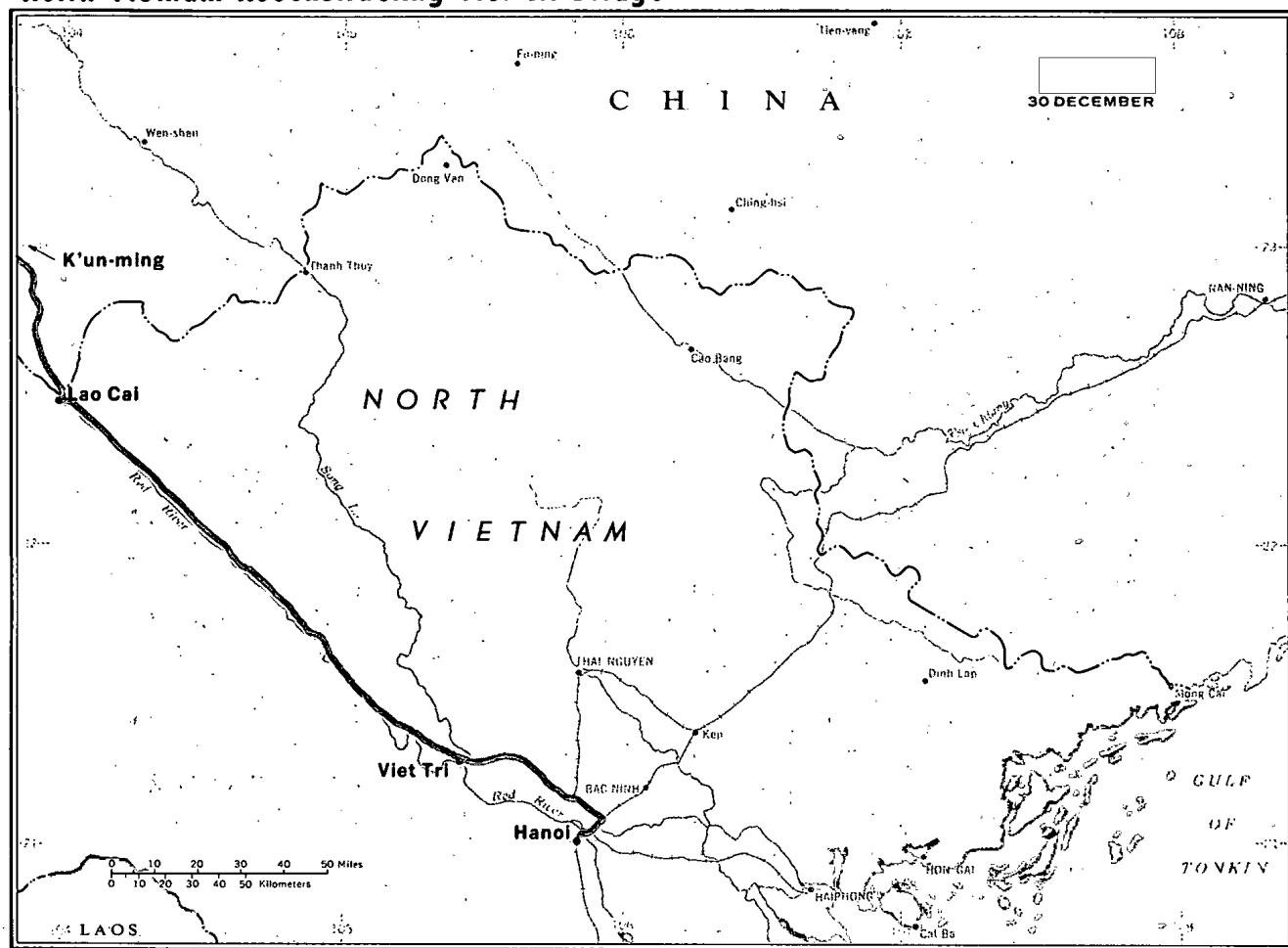
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More Repairs to Rail Lines: North Vietnam is reconstructing the 900-foot Viet Tri Rail and Highway Bridge, the most important link in the rail line to the northwest region of the country.

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North Vietnam Reconstructing Viet Tri Bridge



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Bomb damage to the Viet Tri Bridge was left unrepaired for some two years. During the bombing years, the Hanoi-Lao Cai-Kunming line that the bridge served was apparently not needed for deliveries of aid to North Vietnam. The line, however, is the major economic lifeline to the northwest region.

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

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Propaganda Efforts: Vietnamese Communists are making a special effort to keep their case in front of the American people throughout this holiday season. In addition to publicizing the prisoner release issue, Communists on both sides of the 17th Parallel are sending holiday greetings to the American public. Ho Chi Minh yesterday issued a special

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New Year's greeting in which he asked for increased support from the American people for Communist negotiating positions and emphasized the importance of US troop withdrawal. The head of the Liberation Front delegation in Paris, in a special Christmas Eve interview with a CBS correspondent, claimed that the Communists make a sharp distinction between the American people and their "war leaders."

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