

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 20 December 1967



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DAILY BRIEF
20 DECEMBER 1967

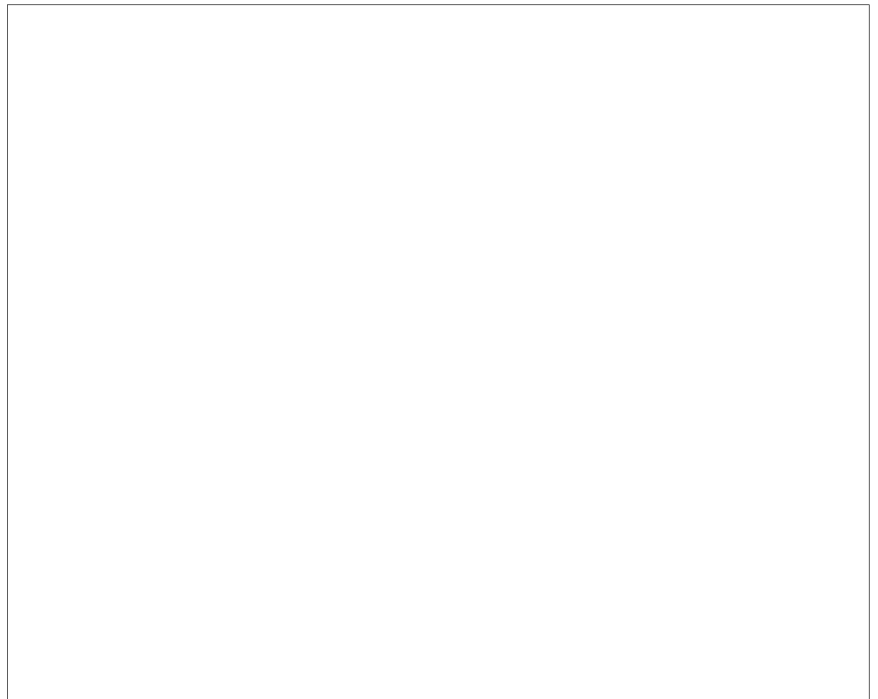
1. South Vietnam

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2. Philippines

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3. Communist China

Preparations for the next nuclear test are progressing.

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[Redacted]

The next test appears at least several weeks away, however.

4. Common Market

The French have again formally vetoed Britain's application. This was an open avowal of Paris' isolated position--and as such was a "success" for the Five. The ball is now in their court.

Their ability to do anything will probably depend upon the German attitude. The Germans may try to play down the air of crisis. Bonn's partners among the Five, however, are likely to resent any German attempt to smooth things over.

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[Redacted]

5. Greece

Negotiations for the King's return have so far run into a stone wall. Constantine has described the junta's latest terms as "a deliberate attempt to humiliate" him, and "completely unacceptable." Other emissaries have still to try their hands, however. Since the King appears to want to return, and the junta seems nervous over lack of recognition, an accommodation is still possible.

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6. Czechoslovakia

The central committee meeting postponed from last week is apparently about to come off, and rancorous divisions among the leadership will probably produce some fireworks. The rumor mill is working overtime, but it now looks as if the result might be the sort of inconclusive compromise that has enabled the regime to muddle through past crises.

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7. Yemen

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8. Congo

Schramme and his mercenaries are still languishing in Rwanda. Mobutu wants them back in the Congo for trial, and is making noises about sending his army in to get them if Kayibanda still refuses to hand them over. The two leaders were to discuss the problem again today.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam

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

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

No Sign of Give: North Vietnamese spokesmen abroad are continuing to parrot the hard line on settling the war. They insist that an unconditional end to the bombing must precede any negotiations, and that a settlement must be in accordance with their terms.

During a lengthy interview with a journalist last week, Tran Viet Dung, counselor of Hanoi's representation in France, refused to consider any suggestions for achieving a settlement except on the basis of well-known Communist positions. He placed the blame for the war squarely on the US and claimed that the American aim is to destroy North Vietnam's sovereignty and make it part of the US "sphere of influence." Dung also claimed that the Liberation Front is much stronger than the "Saigon clique" but he was unable to agree to--or even to comprehend--a proposal that, if this was so, the North Vietnamese could safely agree to a "compromise" government in the South.

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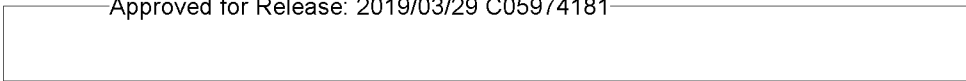
Front Anniversary Propaganda: The Vietnamese Communists are using the seventh anniversary of the founding of the Liberation Front to voice their determination to press on with the war.

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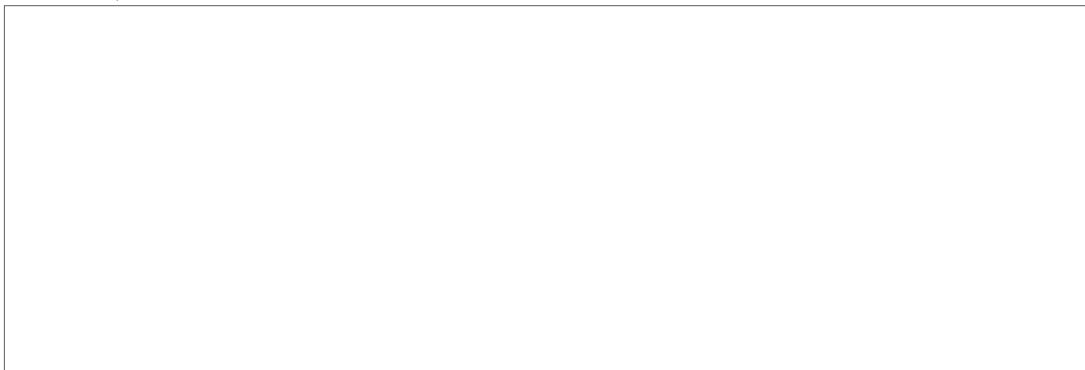
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Poles Talk to Governor Romney on Vietnam: Foreign Minister Rapacki told the Governor on Sunday that the "mechanism" of escalation, which "feeds on itself," is at work and is preventing negotiations-- a point Rapacki has repeatedly made before. Rapacki, choosing his words carefully, went on to say that he could give no guarantees as to how soon negotiations would begin after cessation of bombing. However, Rapacki said he had "reasons" and "sufficient experience" in the last year and a half for "thinking that after an unconditional halt to the bombing, only a few weeks would elapse before negotiations would become possible." He added that the "US Government knows perfectly well that stopping the bombing would lead to negotiations."

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Miscellaneous Comments on Living Conditions:

[Redacted] refugees who left North Vietnam recently presents further details of the austere life in Hanoi. [Redacted] electric power was frequently limited in the city, but that portable generators seemed to take up the slack. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted] there was an active black market in Hanoi and that almost any rationed commodity could be purchased by those who had the price. [Redacted] it was relatively easy to identify a black marketeer; that transactions were carried out right on the street. If the authorities observed the sale, the black marketeer would be fined on the spot, but not punished further, even if he had been caught before. Rice and other foodstuffs, cigarettes, clothing, and watches were popular items on the black market.

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[Redacted]

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the criterion for determining the size of rations was the amount of physical labor performed.

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

Front on Reports of Planned Meeting with US Officials: A 15 December Liberation Front commentary includes the first Vietnamese Communist reference to reports of a planned meeting between US and Front officials in Saigon. The statement says that "all the US aggressors' deceitful peace tricks have gone bankrupt--including their vile act of giving rise to a myth about the so-called proposal of the Front to send representatives to the United Nations, and about the Front's representatives coming to the US Embassy in Saigon." The statement did not comment on these points. It went on to underscore the independence and importance of the Front and to voice the determination of the "Vietnamese people" to "surge forward on all battlefields" in order to "realistically greet" the anniversary of the Front.

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