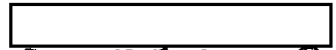


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7 January 1964



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CENTRAL

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

7 January 1964

DAILY BRIEF

South Vietnam: A major reorganization of the top military command offers promise of improving the government's military effectiveness against the Viet Cong.

In a set of decrees issued on 6 January by junta leader General Minh, General Tran Van Don was named commander in chief of the armed forces. Don remains defense minister. The third member of the junta's inner leadership, General Le Van Kim, becomes chief of the Joint General Staff under General Don. Minh remains supreme armed forces commander. Most of the top echelon are French-trained.

Additional shifts appear designed to neutralize generals suspected by the junta of harboring political ambitions. One of these, General Dinh, the security minister, has been relieved of his command of the strategic Third Corps which encircles Saigon.

The reorganization will make the Joint General Staff, frequently bypassed under the Diem regime, the operational high command of the armed forces. This should result in a clear chain of command, the lack of which has proved costly in the past. For instance, the US Embassy reports that the refusal of a Third Corps division commander to send immediate reinforcements to a Ranger battalion pinned down by two Viet Cong battalions turned a potential victory into defeat on 31 December. The embassy states this amounted almost to "criminal negligence" in failing to take advantage of superior government firepower.

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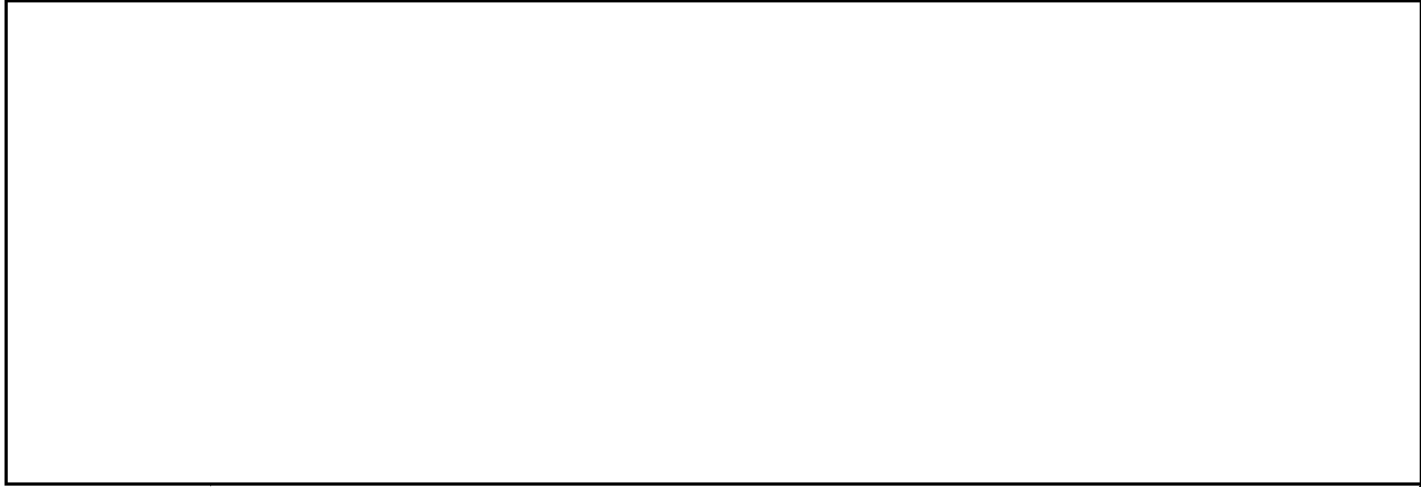
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NOTES

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*Peru: Recent arrests of pro-Cuban Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) members probably have thwarted the organization's plans to begin guerilla operations. The MIR, [redacted] planned to start these long-postponed operations after its first national congress on 10 January. Peruvian police raids on 4 and 5 January netted some 20 MIR members, dynamite, and a large amount of pro-Castro propaganda.

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