

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 24 November 1967



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DAILY BRIEF
24 NOVEMBER 1967

1. Cyprus

The threat of war has not noticeably diminished in the last 24 hours, though the Greeks yesterday began showing some willingness to consider troop withdrawal from Cyprus. Whether they can bring themselves to go far enough, fast enough to satisfy the Turks is still an open question. The Turkish finger is still on the button.

The latest scheme for accomplishing the job without an unacceptable loss of Greek face is a proposed tripartite statement by Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus calling for the removal of all foreign troops, except the United Nations forces. The Greeks say they could agree "in principle." They insist, however, that they cannot negotiate under duress and say that Turkey must first scale down its military threat.

On Cyprus itself, tensions have grown dangerously. [redacted]

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[redacted] This is one factor that led Ambassador Belcher to initiate the evacuation of US dependents today.

2. Egypt

Nasir's tough speech yesterday is bad news. It will further raise Middle East tensions and make an eventual settlement much more difficult. A key point was his categorical statement that Egypt "will never allow Israel, whatever the cost, to pass through the Suez Canal." This departs from his previous position that Israel could ultimately use the canal if the Palestine refugee question was solved.

We are at a loss to explain Nasir's hardened stand. It could be a reflection of new confidence in Egypt's military strength and perhaps also a bow to popular anti-Israel sentiment.

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3. Soviet Union

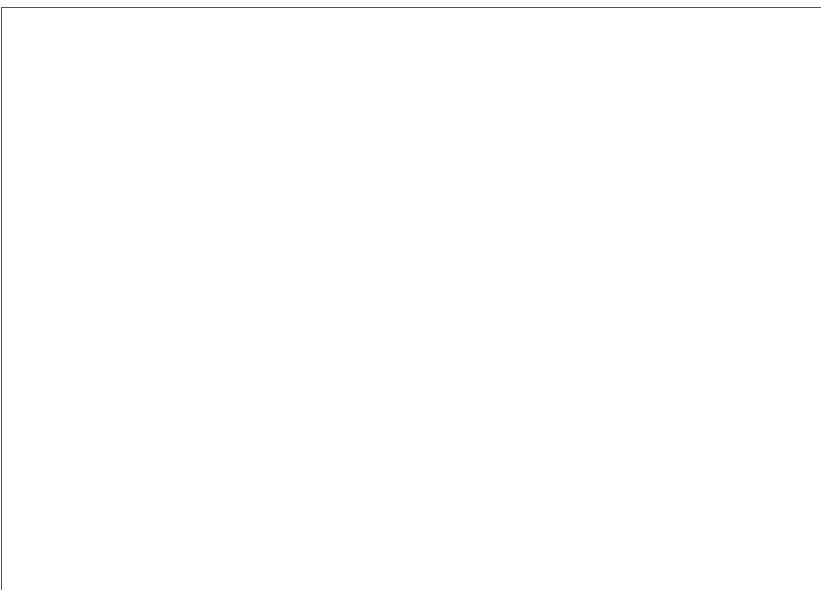
Pravda yesterday carried a long editorial again calling for a new world conference of Communist parties. The Vietnam war and the "chauvinistic, great power course of the Mao Tse-tung group" in China were cited as the main factors making such a conference necessary. Pravda's pitch was the familiar one that Mao's actions have caused "serious damage" to efforts on behalf of the Vietnamese Communists.

Some of Moscow's less enthusiastic allies will look dimly on this latest linkage of Mao's apostasy with the world conference. We understand that Moscow was able to get agreement this month for an early "preparatory" conference only after promising that the sessions would steer clear of attacks on China.

4. Soviet Union

The space failure on Wednesday was a significant setback to Soviet plans. We think it means the Soviets will now be unable to send a manned flight around the moon and back until well after the middle of next year.

5. Communist China



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6. Panama

President Robles

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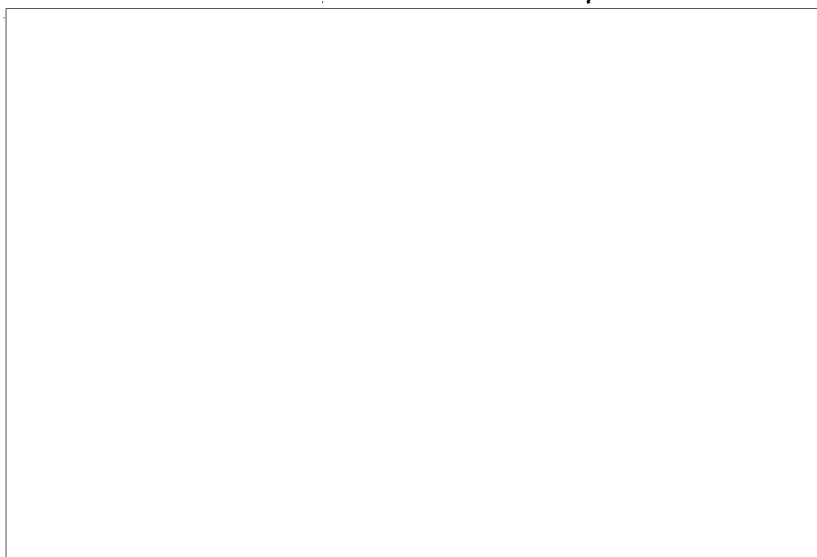
[redacted] has washed his hands for the time being of further efforts to get consensus on a presidential candidate. His two months of trying ended only in deeper divisions and greater confusion.

There seems to have been a final break between the President and David Samudio, the man he had chosen as his successor but whose candidacy split the coalition. After Robles withdrew his support from Samudio, the latter defiantly went ahead and got himself nominated for president by two of the eight coalition parties.

Yesterday, the fragmentation proceeded further with the surprise announcement that four other coalition parties had joined with the opposition to back Arnulfo Arias' bid for the presidency.

7. United Kingdom

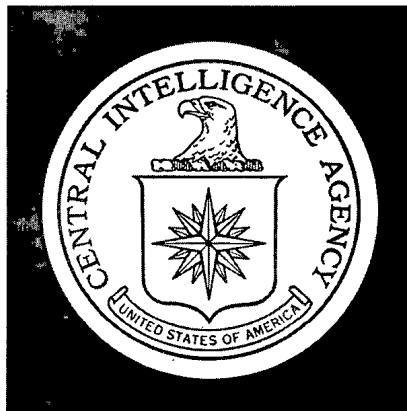
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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam



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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Burchett on Negotiations: United Press International ticker yesterday carried a summary of an article by Wilfred Burchett for a "forthcoming issue of War/Peace, a liberal journal." Burchett's comments are said to be in answer to a published letter by War/Peace editor Richard Hudson.

"It is not correct to say that the Liberation Front is waiting for an American withdrawal before it will talk with non - Viet Cong South Vietnamese," he said. "Indeed, just this possibility is perhaps one of the main points in the new Front program."

Burchett said the offer of "halt the bombings and talks can start" made last January still holds. He said the talks would be "meaningful as far as the North Vietnamese are concerned."

--"Haiphong is already one-third destroyed as far as residential, commercial, and industrial sections are concerned."

--"All power stations, as they existed before the bombing started, have been destroyed."

--"China is ready to intervene at any moment."

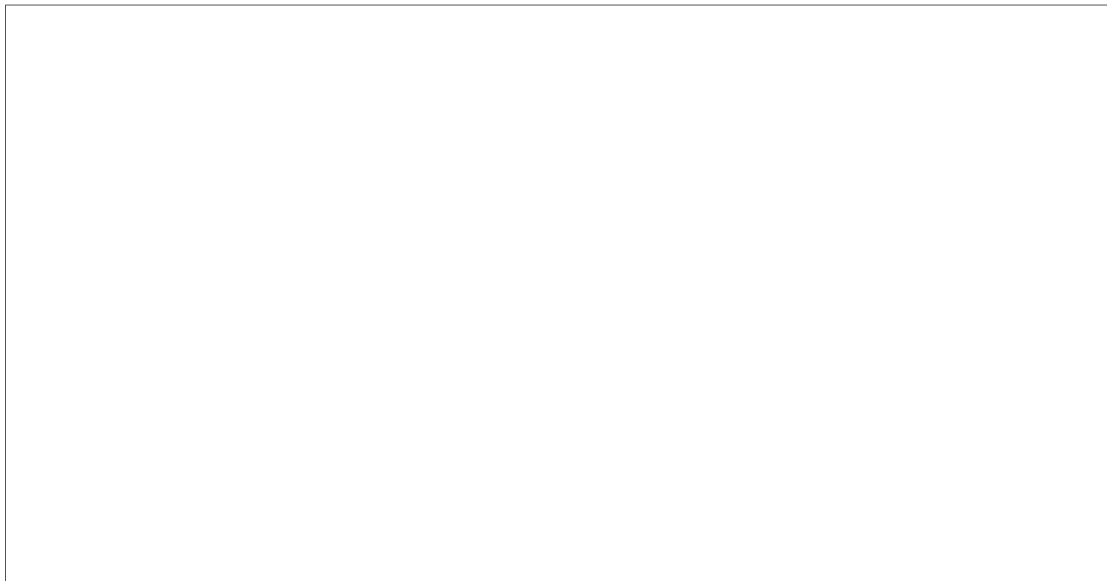
--"Communists have no illusions that a new US President will mean a pull-out."

--"Communists are prepared for a war of 10, 15, or 20 years or more, and have organized accordingly."

--"The Viet Cong never regarded the South Vietnamese elections as serious and therefore did not sabotage them, and in fact voted. Bombing incidents were organized by the Saigon government."

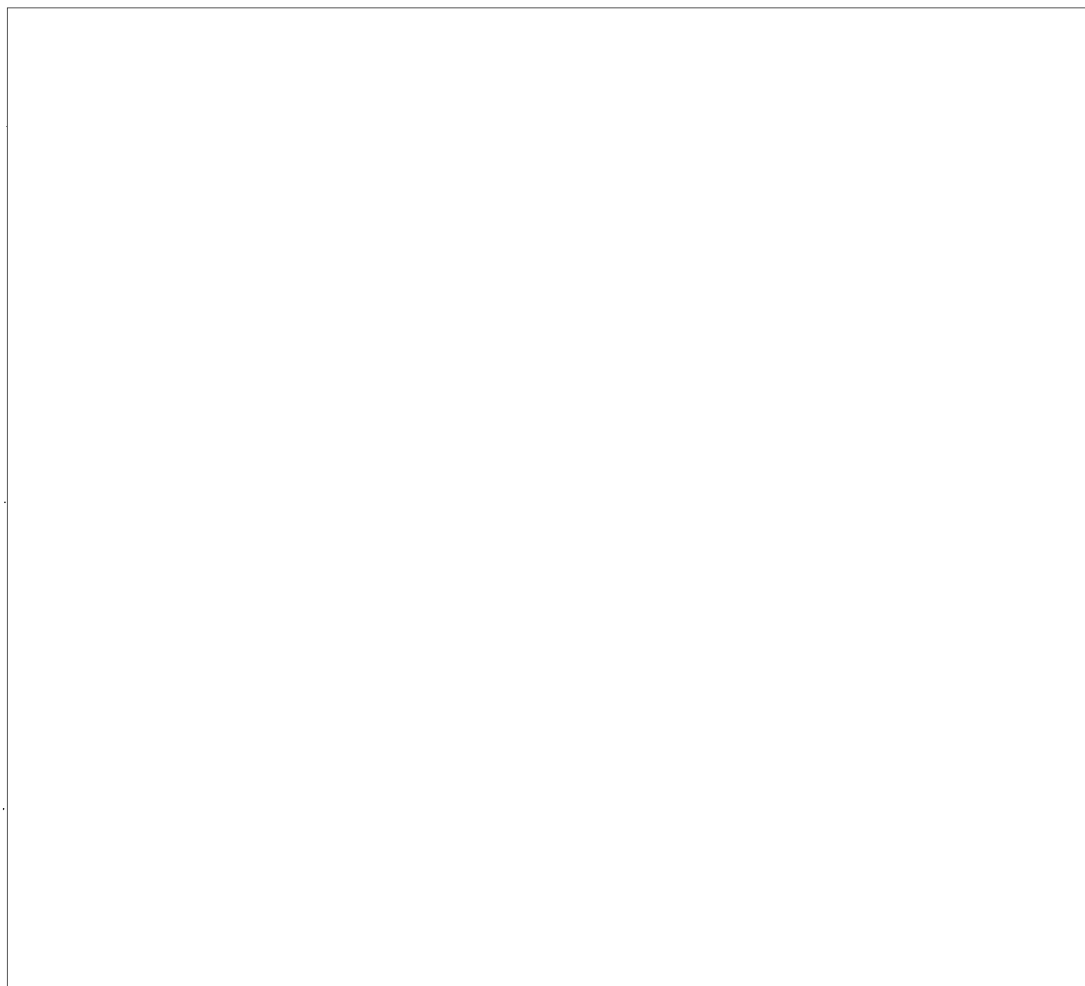
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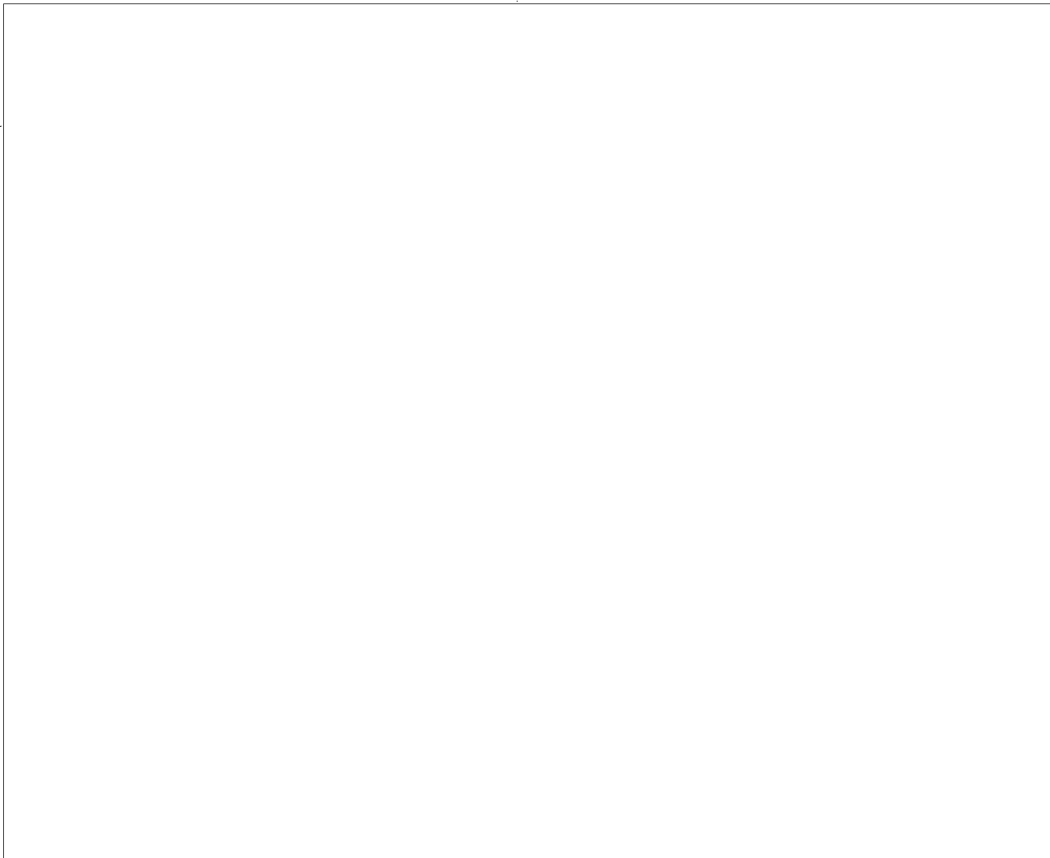
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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Hanoi on President Johnson's Press Conference:
Hanoi Radio on Wednesday, quoting Nhan Dan for the same date, had this to say about the President's press conference on 17 November.

"Never before have Johnson and his aides talked so much of peace as recently. Johnson alone made 11 speeches on the Vietnam problem in the first 17 days of this month. The latest was delivered at a White House press conference 17 November in which, as noted by Western press reports, he looked out of temper from beginning to end. This reflected the tragic isolation which has forced him to come out as a pleader for his own policy of war intensification and expansion in Vietnam.

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"Apart from harping on the old theme of commitments in Vietnam, Johnson gave other pleas for the US aggression. He claimed that the United States had dispatched more than 470,000 troops to Vietnam to protect US security and that this is tied in with Southeast Asia. This is sheer sophistry often resorted to by the colonialists.

"Another plea used by Johnson to intensify and widen his aggressive war in Vietnam is that North Vietnam has not yet agreed to come to the negotiating table. Johnson once again threatened to use maximum strength against the Vietnamese people. This proves that the US imperialists have not yet given up the illusion of forcing the Vietnamese people into submission by violence. Their peace talk proposals merely serve as a smokescreen to cover their reckless war escalation. Their words have always clashed with their deeds. On the same day, Johnson personally ordered American warplanes to launch new air raids on Hanoi and Haiphong. US planes ruthlessly bombed hospitals, markets, pagodas, churches, and heavily populated quarters, and even fired missiles on the foreign embassy area and the Office of the Indian Delegation to the ICC in Hanoi.

"The intensified raids on North Vietnam cannot save the Johnson clique from its critical situation in South Vietnam, but have only brought it still heavier defeats and greater isolation. So long as the US imperialists have not stopped definitively and unconditionally the bombing of North Vietnam, have not stopped their aggressive acts in South Vietnam and withdrawn their troops from there, the friends of peace, justice, and freedom all over the world will reject with utmost indignation and contempt any professions of peace desires by US imperialism, however attractive a form they may assume.

"The 17 November press conference brought nothing new except that it shed more light on the odious features of the chieftain of aggression, a past master in deception and lying."

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