



The President's Daily Brief

~~*Top Secret*~~ 5 January 1968



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DAILY BRIEF
5 JANUARY 1968

1. South Vietnam

[REDACTED]

Buddhists of both factions are trying jointly to form a political party that would operate behind prominent Buddhist politicians. While both moderate and radical Buddhists are interested in this approach, it is questionable that they could resolve their own differences long enough to make an effective team effort.

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2. Common Market

The Germans, reluctant at the prospect of being forced into a confrontation with De Gaulle, are developing a "new approach" in an apparent effort to get the British to back down from their "all or nothing" position. Bonn's idea, still vague, envisions a "first stage" where Britain would participate in the commercial and agricultural aspects of the Community treaties, but not in Community institutions.

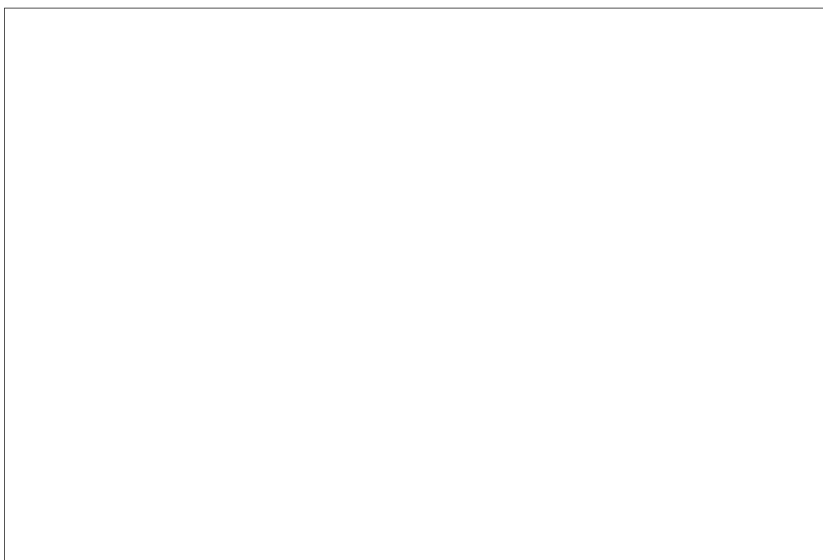
The Germans, while alleging that London's "unbending" stance will get it nowhere, can offer no real hope that France would buy even this compromise formula. As for London, it has previously pointed out the emptiness of such a scheme, and will probably do so again.

3. Cyprus

Five more Greek ships arrived on Wednesday to pick up Greek "illegals." This may help to mute growing Turkish complaints about the slow pace of the withdrawals, but will not settle the troublesome question of how many "illegals" were on the island in the first place.

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4. Communist China



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5. Communist China

A series of meetings between Peking officials and provincial military leaders is taking place, probably on what to do about continuing widespread violence. There is little at the moment to suggest what, if any, cure will be found. Peking's official New Year's Day editorial did not indicate that any marked changes in the Cultural Revolution are imminent.

6. Thailand

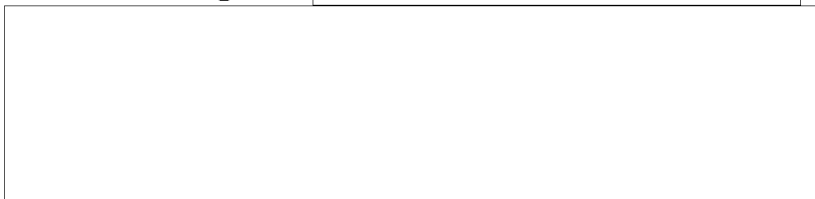
Ambassador Unger believes that additional Thai troops will not be ready for deployment to Vietnam by late April, as agreed at Canberra. He sees no signs that the troops can arrive in Vietnam before July, or June at the earliest.

7. Congo

Mobutu is sending a delegation to Rwanda today to work out the "modalities" of returning the white mercenaries to the Congo.

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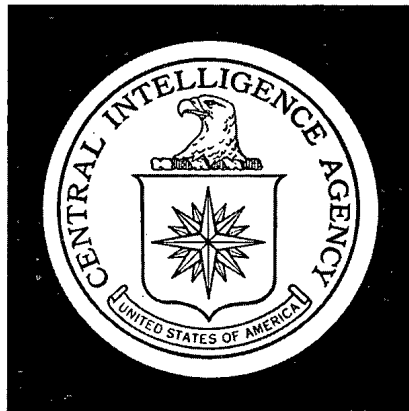
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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

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

Hanoi Moves with Care: North Vietnamese propaganda has not followed up on Foreign Minister Trinh's remarks that North Vietnam will talk to the US if the bombing and other acts of war against the North are stopped. Hanoi doubtless is pleased by the world-wide attention the statement is receiving and the implication that this initiative puts the "ball in the US court." Nonetheless, the North Vietnamese seem bent on sticking precisely to the Trinh formulation and on not having it distorted or embellished by others.

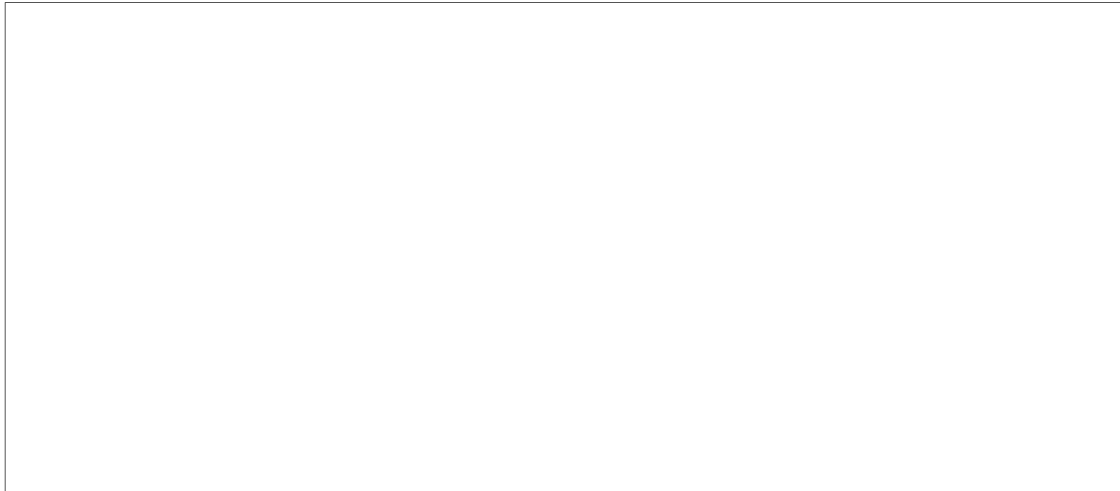
Hanoi's insistence on precision is underscored by an announcement from the North Vietnamese mission in Paris on 4 January. This announcement sought to clarify a Western correspondent's account of an interview with a spokesman for the mission the day before. The correspondent reported that the spokesman had "confirmed more clearly than ever that Hanoi is willing to open peace talks at once" if the bombing is stopped. In response to a question about whether the negotiations would be fruitful, the spokesman, according to the correspondent, remarked "we are ready, the next step is up to President Johnson." In its clarification yesterday, the North Vietnamese mission in Paris stated that a spokesman had confirmed the Trinh statement and it quoted the relevant sentences. It tersely added, however, that the rest of the correspondent's story "is pure invention."

Similar precautions about sticking to Trinh's formulation are evident in Soviet handling of the subject. Moscow reported the crucial portions of the Trinh speech without comment in its domestic and international broadcasts on 2 January. A story from a Soviet correspondent in Hanoi on 3 January uses the same language [redacted]

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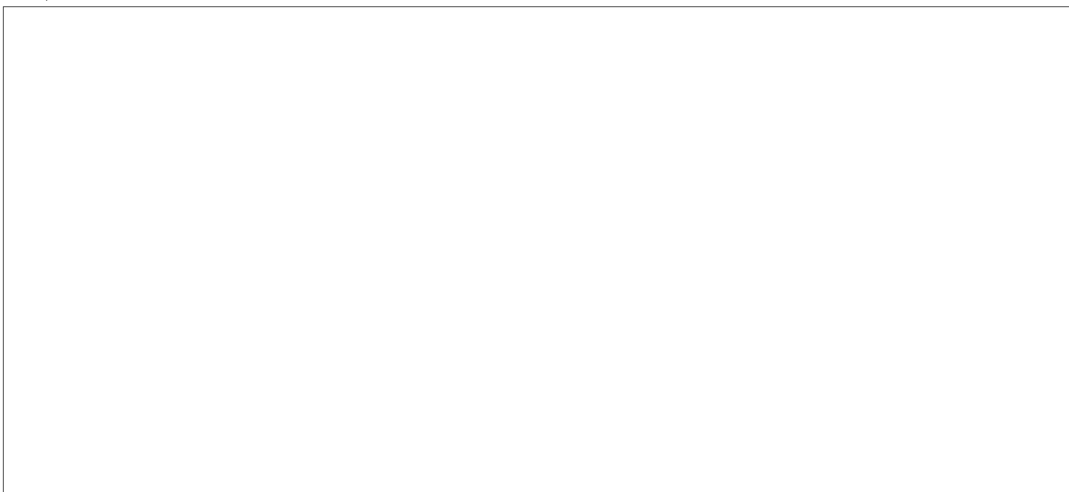


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Ho Calls for "Thrift, Production, and Combat":
According to a 31 December Hanoi broadcast, Ho paid tribute and pointed out "shortcomings" in government work during the past year to a year-end Council of Ministers' meeting. The work of the people's armed forces and communication and transportation forces came in for praise. Ho, however, criticized the management of labor and financial resources. The usual exhortations were made by Ho concerning performance in agriculture and animal husbandry. New efforts were called for during 1968 "to satisfactorily fulfill the state plan." To start the New Year out right, Ho described the situation during Tet as one of "thrift, production, and combat."

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Rail Repairs: Bombed rail lines are usually repaired in a few hours, reports one of the refugees

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[redacted] He said civilians of both sexes and all ages are mustered from villages near the damage and work the clock around until they get the job done. The villagers are not paid and must provide their own food. Most of the work is hand labor.

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[redacted] he has seen as many as 10,000 people conscripted for work gangs.

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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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