

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 27 January 1968



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DAILY BRIEF
27 JANUARY 1968

1. North Korea

About 75 percent of North Korean territory was covered in yesterday's Black Shield mission, which was carried out in generally excellent weather. A quick first look at the pictures in the field shows the Pueblo in Wonsan Bay with no apparent damage.

A total of 54 MIG fighters was observed at the nearby airfield, according to the preliminary field analysis. The Wonsan surface-to-air missile site was occupied, as were numerous anti-aircraft artillery sites in the area. Seven Komar class guided missile boats were seen at or near the Wonsan naval base and some of them may have been armed with missiles. At least 17 other assorted small combat vessels were at the base or patrolling offshore.

There was no sign of salvage operations in the area where the Pueblo is thought to have jettisoned some of its special equipment.

The photographs are expected in Washington tonight and work on them is to get underway immediately.

The North Korean regime, meanwhile, shows no sign of modifying its adamant stand. In a domestic broadcast early today, Pyongyang radio carried a government statement declaring strong opposition to any debate by the UN Security Council in response to the US request. The announcement stressed that Pyongyang would proclaim null and void any resolution "rigged up to cover the US imperialist aggression."

2. Philippines

President Marcos returned last week from his swing through Southeast Asia bubbling with enthusiasm over the prospects of closer ties among the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

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3. Israel

The Israelis are acting more and more like permanent residents in Arab Jerusalem; the remaining Arabs feel they are being squeezed out. The latest Israeli move is to bulldoze undeveloped areas in the city preparatory to launching their own development projects there.

4. Panama

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5. Denmark

The King has asked Hilmar Baunsgaard of the neutralist-leaning Radical Liberal Party to form a new government. This will not be easy. The two other non-Socialist parties he would need in a coalition, while agreeing with Baunsgaard on domestic policy, take a dim view of the Radical Liberal call for reconsideration of Denmark's NATO membership.

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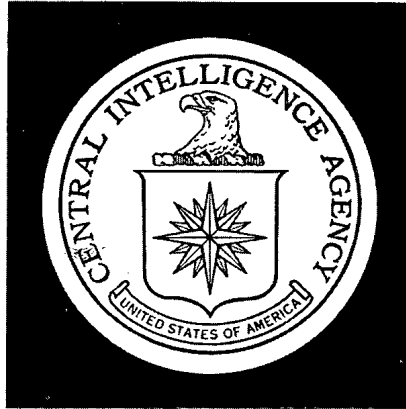
6. Chile

President Frei now believes he will have hard work keeping the Communists from making important gains in next year's congressional elections and even in the 1970 presidential elections.

The Moscow-line party has found the legal political game rewarding in Chile and Frei has reason for concern. He told visiting Senators Gore, Miller, and McIntyre earlier this month that he thinks Chile has become a Communist testing ground; that the local party is out to prove for Moscow that electoral action is more effective than Castro-style revolution.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam



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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

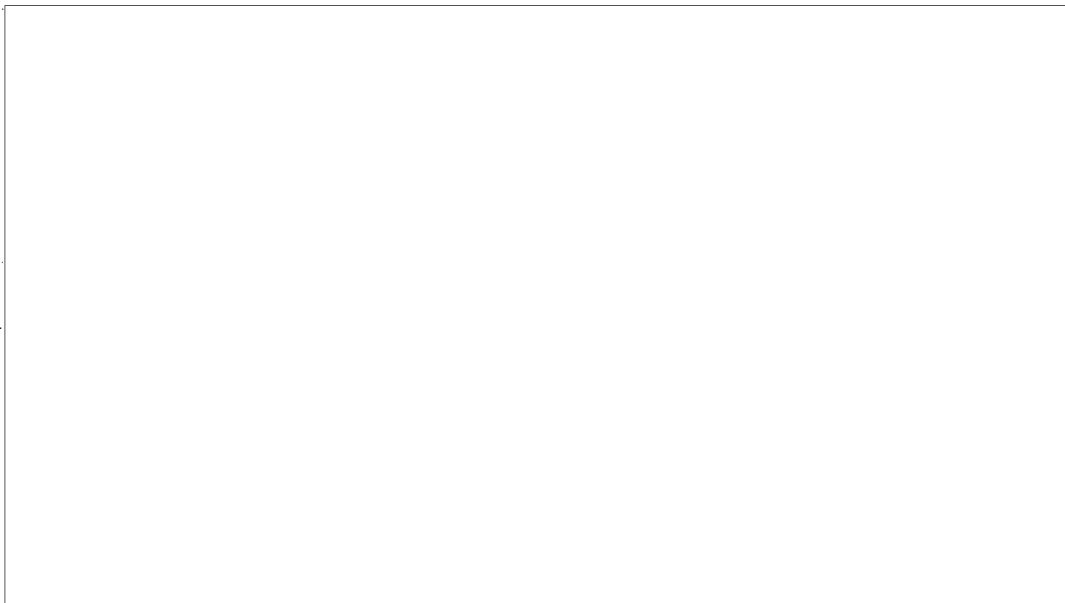
Hanoi to Release Three US Pilots: Hanoi's domestic radio service broadcast the announcement this morning that the North Vietnamese army, "on the occasion of Tet," had decided to release three US "aggressor pilots" captured in North Vietnam. These pilots, the broadcast went on, had "displayed a repentant attitude" during the period of their detention.

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More Hanoi Comment on the Pueblo Seizure: The Hanoi party daily Nhan Dan, in an editorial broadcast internationally on 26 January, condemned as "a new act of war provocation" the sending of a US "spy ship" into North Korean territorial waters and praised the Koreans for "neatly capturing the whole US gang of spies and their ship." In keeping with other Hanoi comment on the incident, there was no effort to tie the seizure of the Pueblo to the situation in Vietnam.

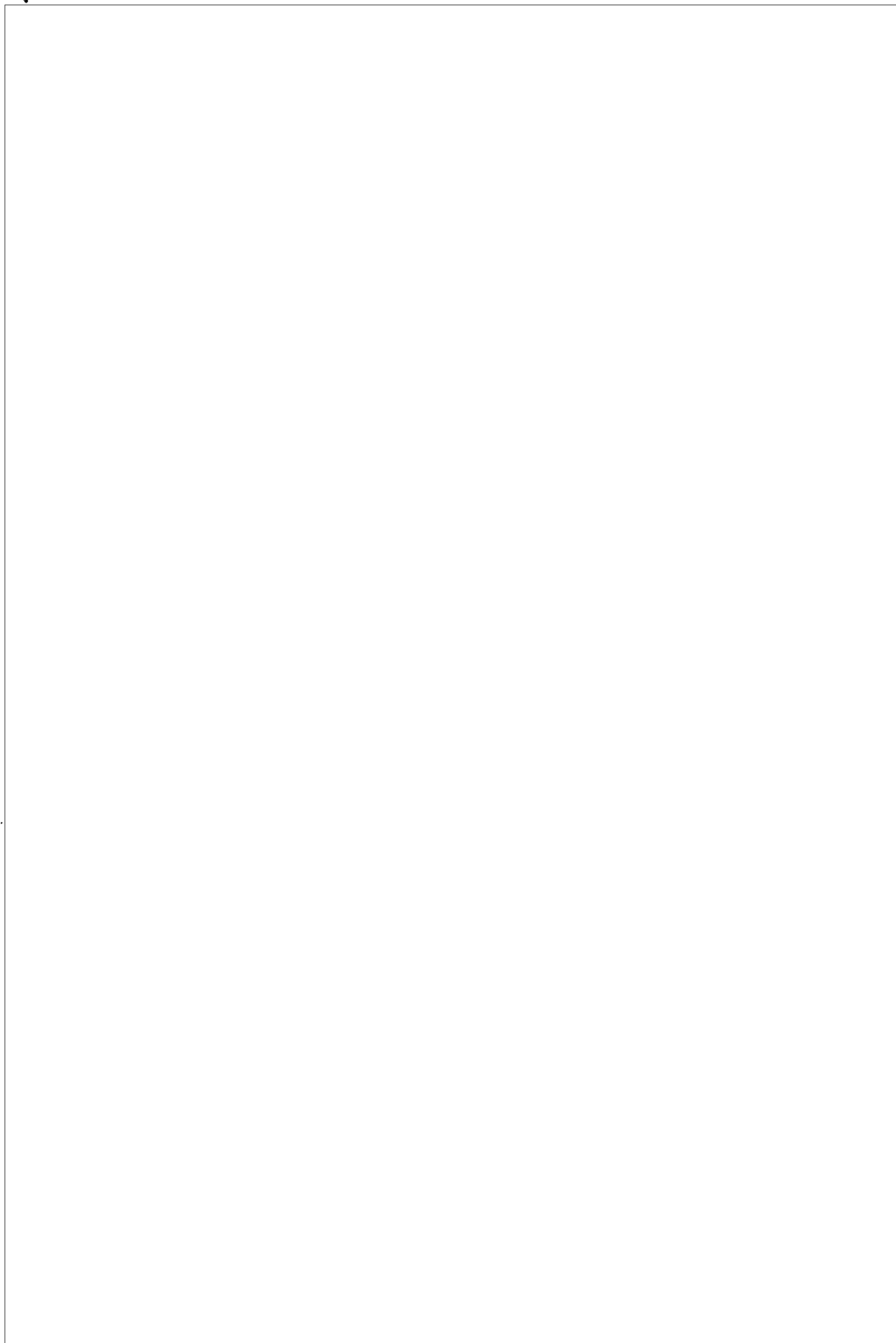
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Hanoi Urges Property Inventory: A late December article in the party journal urged cadre, workers and government employees to tighten property management systems and work for more accurate inventory methods during the current "war environment." The article said a number of people had not recognized their responsibility in the protection of government property and declared "waste and corruption are still widespread."

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Mai Van Bo Gets a Flag: Mai Van Bo's efforts to obtain from the French Government more of the prerogatives which go with his claimed status as head of a diplomatic mission are making some headway. Bo is now flying a flag on his official vehicle and he will soon be given diplomatic plates. Heretofore, the North Vietnamese delegate general had been driving around Paris with temporary tourist license plates.

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Hanoi on Tet Truce: Hanoi propaganda on the impending Tet truce has continued to contrast the shortened 36 hour allied ceasefire with the "more humane" seven day standdown the Liberation Front has called for. The Communists at the same time have gone to some length to document alleged US truce violations during the Christmas and New Year periods and to imply that the "weakened position" of the US will bring about additional violations during Tet.

A 25 January Hanoi broadcast set the tone of Communist comment. It claimed that the shortening of the allied truce from 48 to 36 hours was a manifestation of the difficult situation and the "savagely nature" of the allies, who demonstrated no regard for the South Vietnamese people. The statement went on to list alleged US violations of past truces and to underscore the fact that the Liberation Front's seven day standdown was undertaken out of "deep respect for the people's customs and habits."

New French Press Agency Correspondent About to Leave for Hanoi: The US embassy in Paris reports that French Press Agency correspondent Jean Le Mauff will leave Paris on 29 January and arrive in Hanoi on 2 February to replace the present Agency correspondent there, Bernard Cabanes. In a conversation with the embassy in early January Le Mauff gave the impression of being generally pro-American, anti-Communist and having an open mind on his Vietnam assignment.

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Hanoi Newspapers Merge: Hanoi has merged the two local dailies that serve the metropolitan Hanoi-Haiphong area

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The official explanation for the merger is that the two newspapers (Thu Do, the local party daily, and Thoi Moi, the local government paper) served the same readership and that a single newspaper would enable the party and the government to "more efficiently realize their approaches and policies."

The official explanation suggests that the party may be having difficulty supervising both these publications and that some news items out of step with the official party line may have sneaked through. It is equally possible, however, that the reason for the merger is that the readership of these newspapers has diminished because of the extensive evacuation of the capital area. One newspaper can probably adequately cover subscription needs, and will help to take some of the pressure off local propaganda authorities. It is also possible that the bombings have in some way affected the Hanoi publishing business as they have other Hanoi enterprises.

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

Nothing of significance to report.

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