



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 4 January 1969



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
4 JANUARY 1969

1. Soviet Union

A launch "window" for Venus will be open soon and the Russians probably will take advantage of it to attempt two or three probes to the planet. The best day will be about 13 January, but the launches could be made several days on either side.

The Soviets may try a repeat of their Venus 4 mission. This probe, while not a complete success, sent back data on the Venusian atmosphere before it hit the planet in October 1967.

From their present positions, the Soviet space support ships could back up a Venus shot and other space events as well.

2. Commonwealth
Conference

Harold Wilson is in for rough going when the Commonwealth prime ministers meet from 7 to 15 January in London. Part of the problem is that the Commonwealth no longer has much in common--Australia and Swaziland, for example, share few interests while India and Pakistan share only enmity. But British policies will draw most of the brickbats thrown. This year's divisive issues include Rhodesia, Nigeria, and Britain's immigration policy.

The African prime ministers will charge Wilson with renegeing on agreed Rhodesian policy, and those who back Biafra will assail Britain's support for the federal side.

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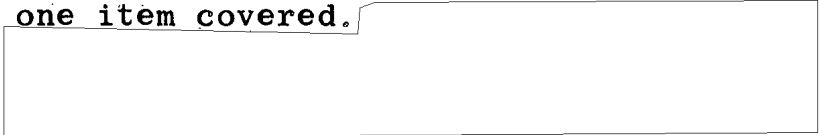


3. Pakistan

Trouble is expected in Karachi this weekend when outspoken Ayub critic Asghar Khan arrives for a four to six weeks' stay. Numerous antigovernment activities are planned to welcome Asghar, the popular ex - air force chief who entered opposition politics in mid-November.

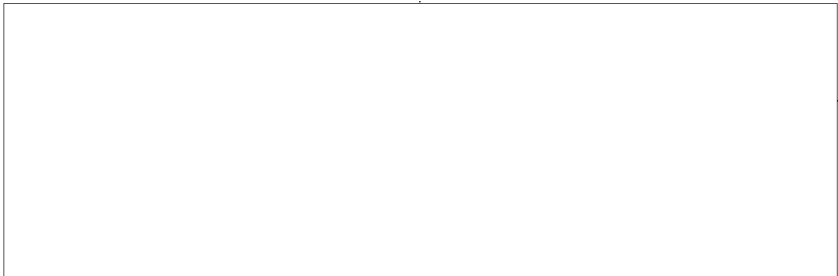
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Soviet Defense Minister Grechko visits Pakistan later this month. The result probably will be Pakistan's first military aid agreement with the Soviet Union. Tanks are expected to be one item covered.



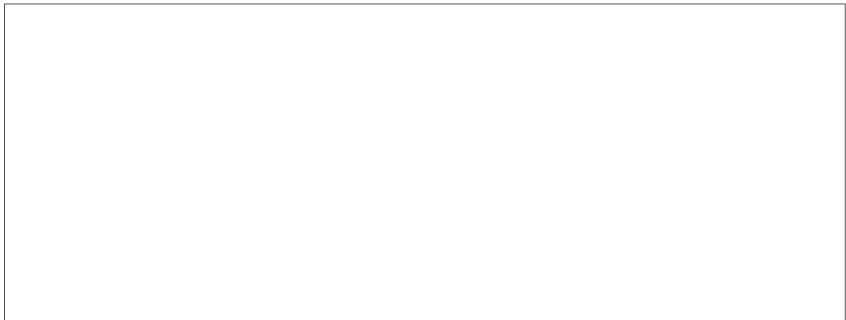
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4. NATO



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5. Israel-Jordan



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Insurrection Flares in Disputed Guyana Region



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*Late Information Indicates That Lethem
Is Back Under Government Control*

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6. Guyana

Their official denials notwithstanding, the Venezuelans are supporting an insurrection which broke out in a remote corner of southwest Guyana this week. Another attack may be coming further north.



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One of the ranchers, who gave himself up yesterday, has admitted receiving Venezuelan help. Last night Venezuela's foreign minister again denied complicity and suggested Brazilians might be the culprits.

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The ranchers, some of whom are US citizens, are a particularly rough crew with a flair for violence and a long-standing grudge against the government. They have been compared with some of the New Mexico ranchers of the 1880's.

Government forces have retaken the town the ranchers and their Indian cohorts seized Thursday, but well armed rebels are still loose in the countryside.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam

- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of US
Political Attitudes



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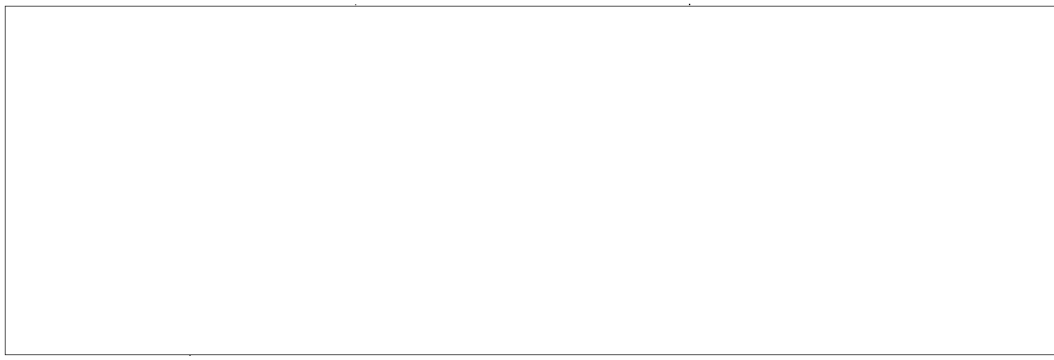
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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

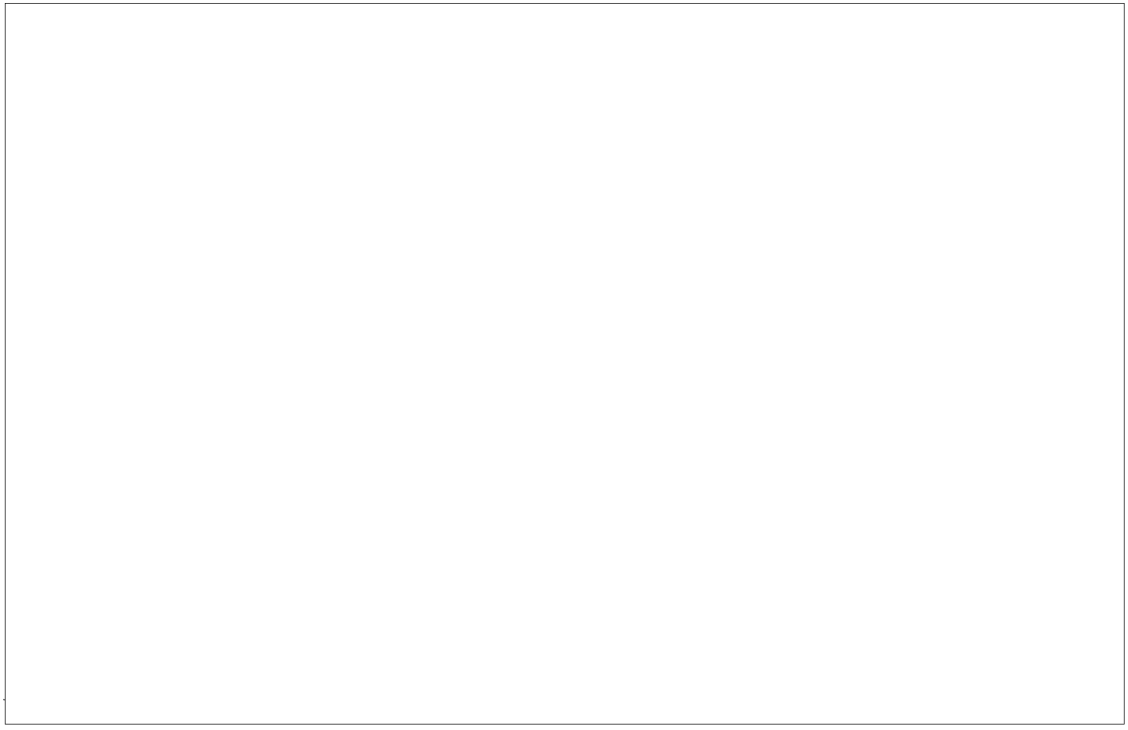
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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION



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Japanese Resume Shipping to North Vietnam: The first regular Japanese shipping to North Vietnam since the US bombing began in March 1965 may resume this month.

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Since March 1965, only one Japanese vessel has stopped in North Vietnam--in May 1968. Further stops were canceled following informal US representations and pressure by the Japanese Government.

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Conditions in Hanoi:

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no significant numbers of evacuees have been permitted to return to the city. the current population of Hanoi is about 600,000 and that about 400,000 evacuees were still in the countryside. These figures are in the ball park of the estimated evacuation of Hanoi at the height of the bombing. There have been other reports, however, of a significant drift back into the city.

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black marketing is rife in Hanoi and since the 1 November bombing halt, foreign manufactured products have begun to show up in this channel in significant volume. The black market is now so extensive that the authorities no longer attempt to control it. This is probably an exaggeration. The black market is, nevertheless, a very real feature of the North Vietnamese economy. The top levels of the leadership have issued dire warnings about its extent and its continued existence.

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

There is nothing of significance to report to-day.

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