



*The President's Daily Brief*

21 January 1970

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS



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The level of North Vietnamese infiltration rose sharply during the past ten days. (Page 2)

President Thieu has made several significant changes in military command personnel

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Recent Soviet press articles that suggest increased tension and politicking within the Kremlin leadership are discussed on Page 4 and at Annex.

The Israelis last night made a retaliatory attack across the Jordanian border, south of the Dead Sea. (Page 6)

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### NORTH VIETNAM

The level of infiltration has risen sharply during the past ten days. Analysis of new infiltration group designators strongly suggests that at least 13 battalion-size units entered the infiltration pipeline in North Vietnam during that period. This rate is much above that noted during the first ten days of January and represents an input of about 7,500 troops.

*The continued appearance of infiltration numbers in rough sequential order further strengthens our belief that communications intelligence is providing a reliable basis for measuring infiltration. Altogether, the number of North Vietnamese combat troops believed to have entered the pipeline since late October now stands at more than 28,000. Over roughly the same time frame (November, December, and January) in 1968-69, there were 55,000 in the pipeline; for the same period in 1967-68, there were 42,000.*

*The Communists are continuing to assign the bulk of their new infiltrators to the southern portions of South Vietnam, probably including the Mekong Delta region. Most of these troops will be arriving at their destinations during February, March, and April.*

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SOUTH VIETNAM

President Thieu has embarked on a significant shake-up of key military commands. The chief of the best division in the delta is taking over command of the area around Saigon. His predecessor there, who has done a creditable job of protecting the capital, apparently is in line to be the new II Corps commander. The chronically weak 7th Division, which is now solely responsible for the upper delta since the departure of US forces from that area, will be taken over by an effective airborne brigade commander.

[Redacted]

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*The needs of the Vietnamization program probably lie behind these changes. Rather than being politically motivated, they seem to reflect a desire for more aggressive and dynamic military leadership.*

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SOVIET UNION

For the past several weeks, curious editorials and articles discussing problems of leadership and decision-making have been appearing in the Soviet central press. No single article provides more than an ambiguous hint of these problems. Cumulatively, however, they suggest increased tension and politicking in the leadership. The targets and critics are still hard to identify, but the Soviet leadership will bear especially close watching for the next few weeks. A more detailed discussion of these articles appears at Annex.

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GREECE

King Constantine wants to return to Greece and is willing to do so without setting conditions on the ruling junta. [REDACTED]

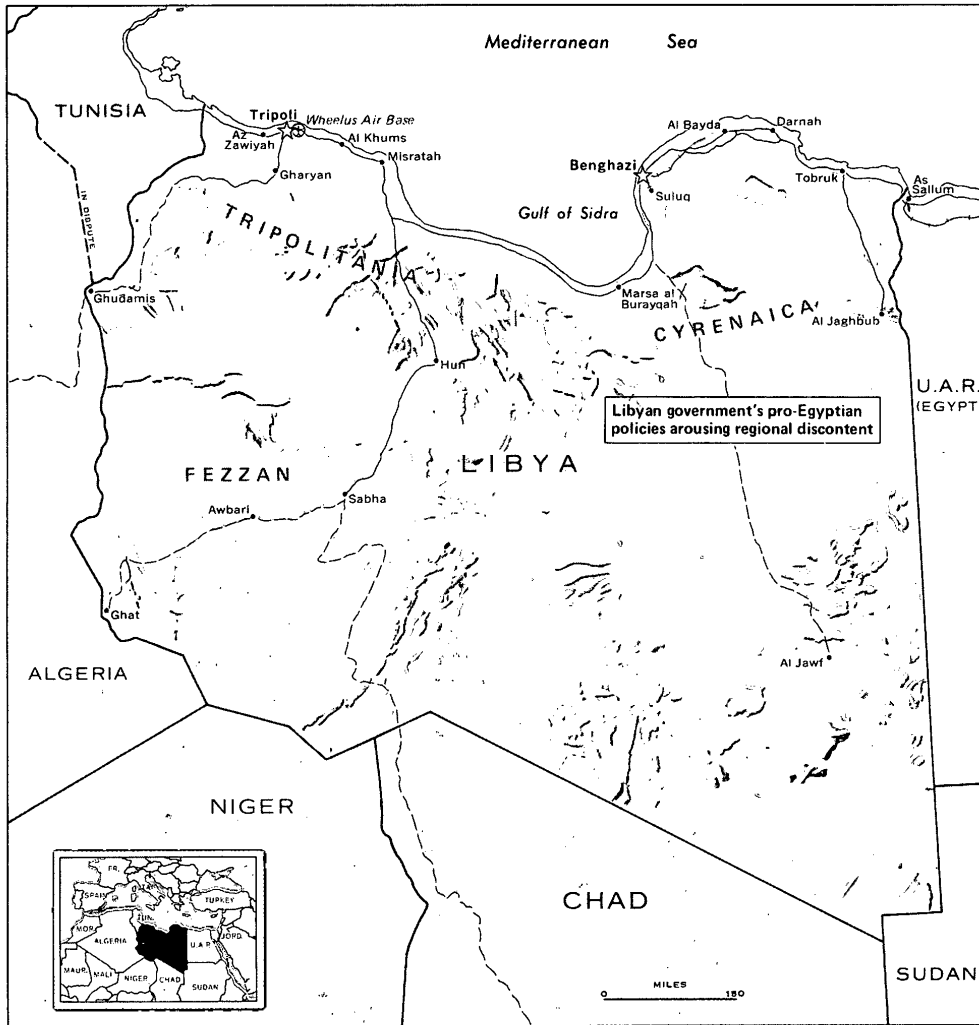
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[REDACTED] Constantine also said he would like to meet with someone from the Greek Government prior to his return. Foreign Minister Pipinelis, a royalist holdover, told Ambassador Tasca on 19 January that he favors the King's return and has repeatedly urged Premier Papadopoulos to begin a dialogue with Constantine.

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*Papadopoulos may also favor the end of Constantine's exile, but some members of the regime do not. As a result, Papadopoulos will be reluctant to act on this contentious issue without the full backing of his associates.*



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NOTES

Libya: Junta leader Qaddafi's moves to draw closer to Cairo are generating growing resentment in the former royalist province of Cyrenaica. Some Cyrenaican troops recently mutinied when told they were being assigned to Suez Canal duty, [redacted]

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[redacted]

Israel-Jordan: Last night a small Israeli force including armor crossed the cease-fire line south of the Dead Sea and fought for several hours with fedayeen, Jordanian regulars, and Saudi troops, according to military spokesmen in Amman. Tel Aviv has confirmed the attack but has not yet given details. The raid was in retaliation for recent fedayeen attacks against the Israeli potash plant at Sedom, one of the more sensitive points along the Israeli-Jordanian border.



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SOVIET UNION

Recent Soviet press articles have been critical of several aspects of leadership, but one recurring theme is a leader's obligation to listen to the opinion of others. One article warned strongly against leaders who fail to learn at their jobs and to keep up with the times. Another commented sharply that collective leadership is no excuse for indecision. Still another warned that discussion of unsettled issues should not be allowed to leak into public propaganda.

This is the time of year when annual figures on the economy are usually available in Moscow. Traditionally, it is a time for taking stock and reviewing problems. The 1969 plan fulfillment figures probably do not present a very cheering picture. Seasonal or not, there is something very close to impatience in the tone of these articles. We suspect that the debate within the leadership is heating up considerably, under the impact of gloomy news about the economy, and that these articles are symptoms of recriminations behind the scenes.

Debate over economic matters could be especially intense this year because the five-year plan and the economic reform adopted in 1965 are drawing to a close. Those hostile to the reform seem to be suggesting that present economic difficulties are the result of the reform. Those partial to the reform complain that it has been poorly implemented. Still others use current problems to argue for developing the reform further and adopting new measures. The result is that a program which the leadership agreed to five years ago is becoming increasingly a matter of dissension.

The regime this month publicly admitted for the first time that there had been recent difficulties in food supplies in major industrial cities. Provincial leaders who must cope with these difficulties are undoubtedly adding to the pressures already being exerted on the top leadership, which still cannot seem to agree on a course of action.

In summary, it appears that there is a good deal of jockeying for position going on within the Kremlin as the leadership prepares for the Party Congress due to be held sometime later this year.

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