



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF



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31 DECEMBER 1965

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1. Vietnam

US peace probes on Vietnam are receiving considerable attention in Western Europe. In Britain, the press has latched on to them enthusiastically and optimistically. Most papers note the harsh and unpromising noises from Hanoi, but pass them off lightly as required public posturing. Editorials are more restrained than news articles.

The US Embassy in London is gratified by the reaction, which clearly presents the US as engaged in a major effort to do all possible to achieve peace. This, the embassy feels, should have a very favorable impact on British opinion.

The West Germans are also showing lively interest, but their reaction in the press is much more sober and restrained. There is hope, but considerable skepticism, that the US effort will result in anything positive.

2. North Vietnam

[Redacted]

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3. South Vietnam

US military authorities in Saigon on the basis of new information have raised their estimate of Communist combat strength in South Vietnam. They are now carrying 70,100 as confirmed Viet Cong - North Vietnamese strength in the south and believe there are probably another 2,800 there.

[Redacted]

[Redacted] the infiltration into that country during November of large numbers of new combat personnel from the north.

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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4. Thailand

Thai security forces have launched an attack on a suspected Communist insurgent base in an isolated valley of north-eastern Thailand. The attackers have been supported by air strikes [redacted]

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[redacted]

[redacted] previous, smaller scale attempts to rout out Communist groups have not been outstandingly successful.

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5. Bolivia

Pressures on the Barrientos junta should be eased considerably by yesterday's cabinet decision to hold elections next July. The decision also provides that presidential candidates must resign their government positions 90 days beforehand.

These provisions should go far toward disarming politicians and military officers who have been agitating for a return to civilian government. [redacted]

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[redacted] Other danger signs are up, however. Labor leaders are predicting still another crisis at the main tin mines next month. The miners are discontented about wage scales and worried that improved mining techniques will only cost them their jobs.

6. Dominican Republic

[redacted]

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[redacted]

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7. Venezuela

Violence-minded Communist guerrillas have broken with the orthodox Venezuelan Communist Party and set up a separate revolutionary command.

The move is the culmination of months of squabbling between the two elements. It has the effect of cutting off the guerrilla leaders from most of their regular Communist sources of supply. It could well herald a new wave of criminal violence--bank robberies, kidnappings, etc.--as the guerrillas try to get money for their operations.

It is in a sense a setback for the Soviets since the new group seems more in tune with Peking than with Moscow.

8. Rhodesia

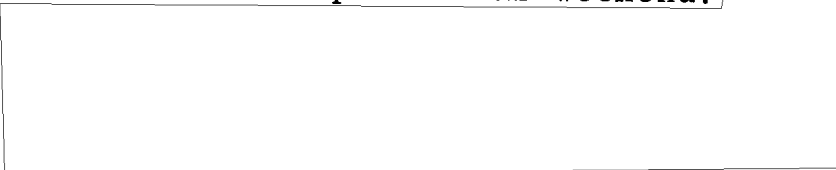
The first petroleum began moving yesterday from the Congo to Zambia. This is a hopeful sign, but so far only a trickle has been sent.



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As shortages develop it will be harder than ever to restrain Kaunda from taking extreme and self-defeating retaliatory actions against Rhodesia.

Rhodesian-owned oil is still being pumped from Beira in Mozambique but the tanks will be emptied this weekend.



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