



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 21 December 1966



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DAILY BRIEF
21 DECEMBER 1966

1. India

Religious and communal fanaticism is threatening to degenerate into violence again over two separate emotion-laden issues.

A prominent Hindu religious leader is well along in a fast to the death protesting the government's refusal to impose a nationwide ban on the slaughtering of cows--the sacred Hindu symbol of motherhood. Another fanatic, a leader of the nine-million-member Sikh minority, is threatening self-immolation next Tuesday unless the government grants territorial and political concessions to a newly created Sikh state.

There are no signs of compromise. Serious trouble could erupt on the death of either fanatic, presenting Mrs. Gandhi with yet another political challenge.

2. Soviet Union

Brezhnev celebrated his sixtieth birthday on Monday to the accompaniment of a more effusive chorus of adulation than he has yet received.

Even allowing for the Soviet habit of celebrating only the decennial birthdays of its leaders, this was a whopper. The bunkum still includes references to collective leadership, but it does appear that Brezhnev's preeminence has now become an undisputed fact of Soviet politics.

3. Soviet Union

The Soviets launched another moon probe this morning, their sixth this year. It will reach the moon Saturday afternoon, but we do not yet know its mission. It will probably either try for a soft landing or--like the last three--a lunar orbit. Our bet is the latter.

4. North Vietnam

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5. Jordan

50X1

King Husayn faces another crucial confrontation with his radical Arab neighbors next weekend. The United Arab Command meets in Cairo then to discuss implementation of its decision to station Iraqi and Saudi forces on Jordanian territory--including MIG-21s.



21 Dec 66

6. Greece

A new government is scheduled to be sworn in tomorrow. It is likely to be only a caretaker regime, however, pending new parliamentary elections in a few months. It is to be headed by Ioannis Paraskevopoulos, a nonpolitical banker who once before put together a transition government.

The sudden change in Athens could throw a monkey wrench into the Greek-Turkish talks over Cyprus. Ankara will have little confidence in dealing with a temporary Greek government.

7. Venezuela

Public reaction to the military occupation of Central University a week ago continues to be surprisingly positive. Even some political leaders who had been strong advocates of university autonomy are now endorsing the government's action.

The police and military are still turning up incendiary devices and other terrorist weapons as they continue combing every nook and cranny of university territory. The Communist terrorist apparatus in Caracas has clearly suffered a severe blow. Only time will tell, however, whether it has been destroyed.

21 Dec 66

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