



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 30 November 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
30 NOVEMBER 1968

1. Laos

The opening of the enemy's annual dry season campaign around the Bolovens Plateau has inspired the annual panicked reaction in Vientiane. The North Vietnamese and their Pathet Lao auxiliaries invariably press toward the plateau and the provincial capitals of Attopeu and Saravane as soon as the roads are dry and the rice harvest is in, but Hanoi's policy has always been to stop short of occupying the plain or the towns.

We think the same political considerations apply this year, although Hanoi may eventually choose to improve its future bargaining position on Laos by seizing a number of the government's advanced military bases.

2. Communist China

Peking's about-face in rejecting a US proposal for a Warsaw meeting in November and then, ten days later, accepting a February date probably reflects a desire to establish early contact with the next US administration.

The Chinese are taking a more active interest in European affairs as well. Their army chief of staff arrived in Albania Tuesday for a two-week visit

The visit serves to underscore Peking's current propaganda pose as the champion of Communist countries oppressed by Soviet revisionism. It could also mean a general revival of Chinese activity in foreign affairs and a return to the pragmatism and "personal diplomacy" that once marked Peking's foreign policy.

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3. Soviet Union

"Hooligans," drunkards, scofflaws, and other antisocial elements will be the main target of Russia's strengthened and renamed Ministry of Internal Affairs. Khrushchev's experiments with auxiliary police, workers' courts, and other amateur law enforcement agencies have failed to stem the rise in common crime, juvenile delinquency, and alcoholic absenteeism. From now on the domestic police--reinforced with recruits from the best of the volunteer auxiliaries--will probably be cracking down hard on "non-political" crimes. Political offenses continue to be the responsibility of the security and intelligence service--the KGB. Indications are that these, too, are going to be dealt with more severely.

4. Rumania

Ceausescu has struck back publicly against the pressures Moscow and the Warsaw Pact powers have been putting on Rumania. Even as senior Pact officers were meeting in Bucharest, Ceausescu in two published speeches stoutly defended Rumania's political and economic rights against the "supra-national" concepts of the Warsaw Pact and the Council for Economic Mutual Assistance.

In almost belligerent terms, he spelled out Rumania's interpretation of its responsibilities and rights under the Warsaw Pact, refused to go along with any tightening of East European economic integration, and implicitly rejected the Soviet-proclaimed right of intervention to preserve the status quo in socialist states.

Meanwhile, Rumanian officials are being wrung through the rumor mill, and some of the wilder reports they have heard suggest that Moscow's disinformation specialists are doing the cranking. Among their genuine concerns is the possibility that Soviet troops will remain in their country after the projected joint exercises, and they are doing their best to determine the circumstances under which this might occur.

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5. Mexico

Hard-line student strikers in Mexico City are still holding out against the general back-to-class movement, and they could provoke further violent attacks on returning students. But security authorities remain firmly in control, and President Diaz Ordaz has resumed his normal schedule of visits around the country.

6. Argentina

Air force officers are in a state of shock over the Ongania government's denial that it would purchase the French Mirage III interceptor aircraft, a decision they thought was firm. The political leaders will now be looking to Washington for a satisfactory solution to their requirement for new supersonic interceptors.

7. Venezuela

Voters tomorrow will be choosing from among four evenly matched presidential candidates, none of whom is expected to win more than 30 percent of the vote. A plurality is sufficient to elect, however. All the seats in the National Congress have to be filled at the same time, and the winner in the presidential race will be spending the time between December and inauguration on 14 March putting together some kind of congressional majority. The tightness of the race and threatened terrorism have put the security forces in a high state of alert.

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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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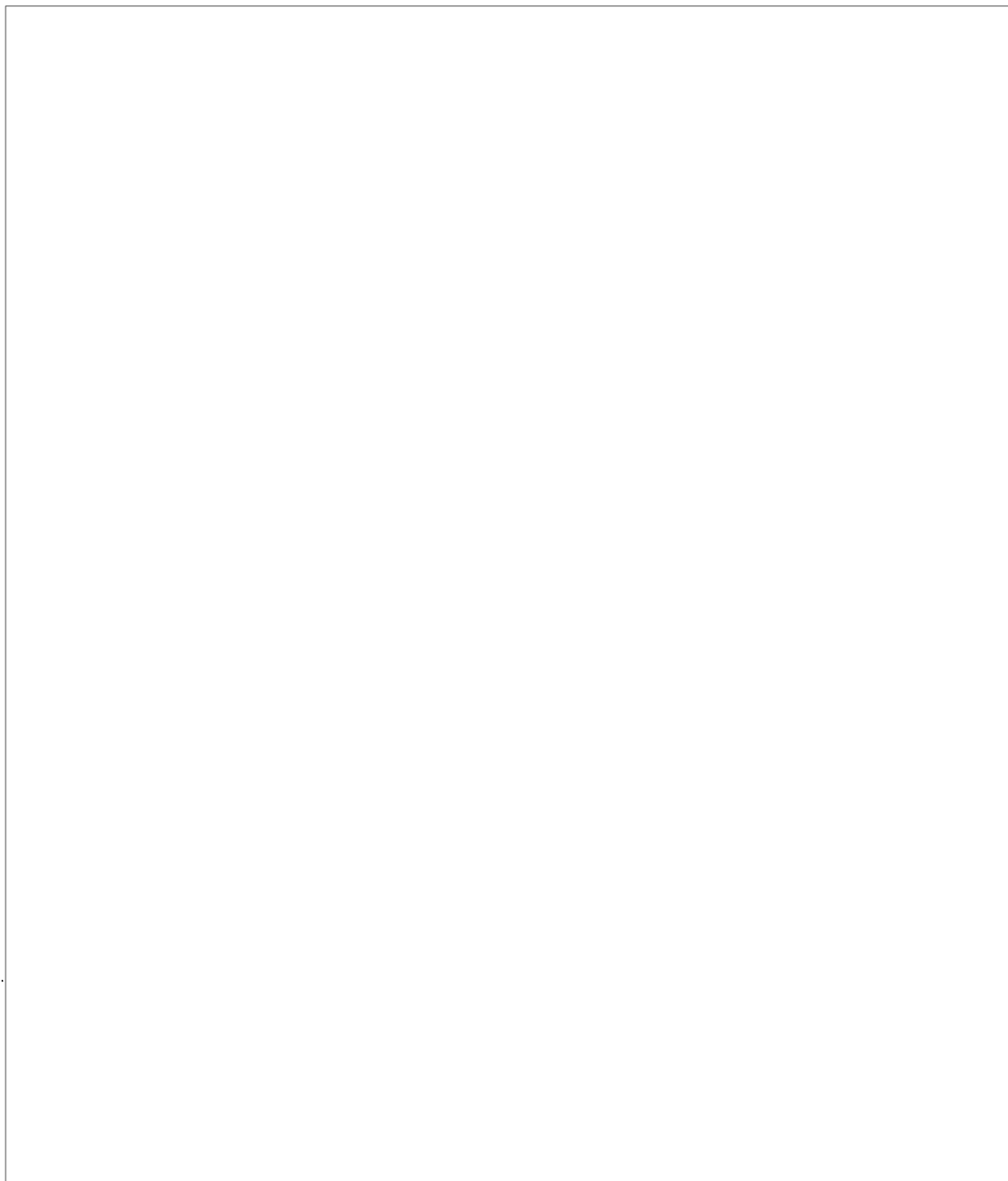
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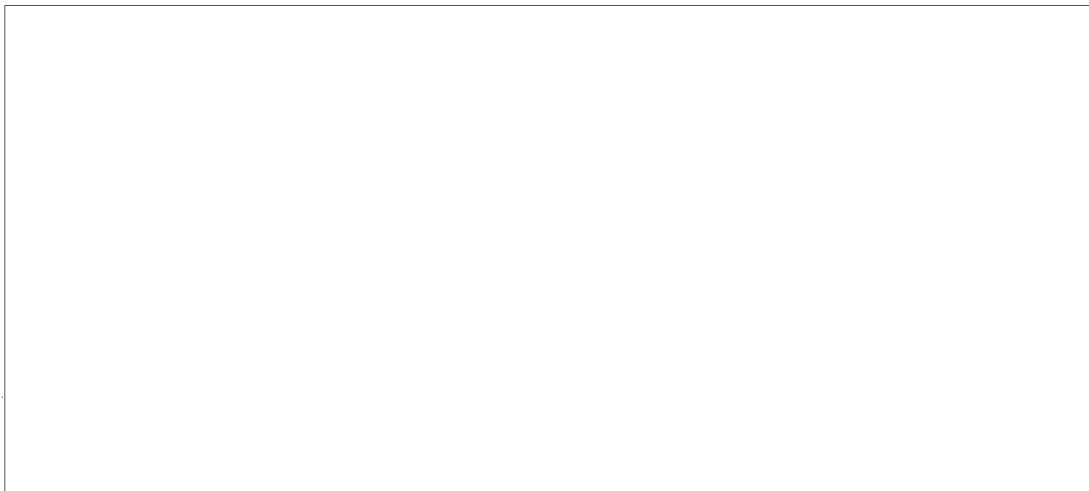
I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION



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Possible Nationwide "Administration" in the South: The enemy is continuing to lay the groundwork for a possible national "administration" in South Vietnam. Liberation Radio on 26 November proclaimed the establishment of another provincial level liberation committee in South Vietnam. The latest addition to the growing list of such administrations is Quang Nam. The broadcast also mentioned Dinh Tuong and Go Cong provinces for the first time in its list of provinces with similar administrations, although it left out Kontum and Quang Tri, which have been claimed in the past.

Liberation Radio went on to state that the building of province level "revolutionary administrations" is leading toward the creation of "favorable conditions for forming a higher echelon revolutionary administration." A Hanoi Radio broadcast of 27 November quoted a statement by the Mongolian foreign minister that "the NLF...in fact...is assuming the function of a government." This kind of statement is being made more frequently as the Communists continue to build up the diplomatic stature of the Front.

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Communist Military Aid Deliveries: The value of Communist military aid to North Vietnam during the first half of 1968 is estimated at about \$275 million, somewhat below the level for the same period in 1967. The estimated drop in the value of military aid reflects the lower requirements for ammunition and

surface-to-air missiles that resulted from the US bombing standdown in the northern portion of the country. Despite this decline, the continued receipt of additional jet fighters and equipment for missile-firing battalions during the first six months of 1968 emphasized the continued willingness of the Communist countries to meet North Vietnamese and Viet Cong needs for armaments.

The Soviet Union is the major supplier of military aid, providing about three-fourths of the total; Communist China provides most of the remainder, with small amounts from Eastern European countries and North Korea. Military aid from Eastern Europe increased in the first half of 1968 but still is only a small part of the total. The Soviets continue to supply ammunition and most of North Vietnam's air defense equipment; Communist China's aid is principally in ammunition and infantry weapons.

In addition, Chinese, Soviet, and North Korean military personnel have been stationed in North Vietnam to assist in training, maintenance, and construction activities; and North Vietnamese have gone to Communist China, the Soviet Union, and Czechoslovakia for military training.

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Delegation in Eastern Europe: The North Vietnamese Communist Party delegation to the recent Polish party congress apparently has been looking for tips on reconstruction from their East European allies. A Warsaw broadcast said that the Poles assured their Vietnamese visitors that they would share their own experiences, making specific reference to the reconstruction of Hanoi. The North Vietnamese delegation, which includes Hanoi's minister of construction, then moved to East Germany where another broadcast indicates the delegates inspected new buildings in Berlin.

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

There is nothing of significance to report
today.

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