

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 22 December 1967

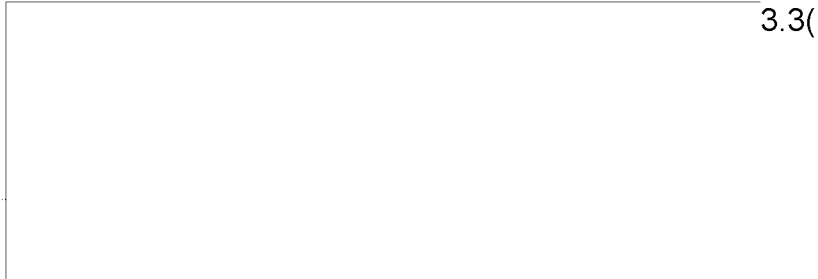


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DAILY BRIEF
22 DECEMBER 1967

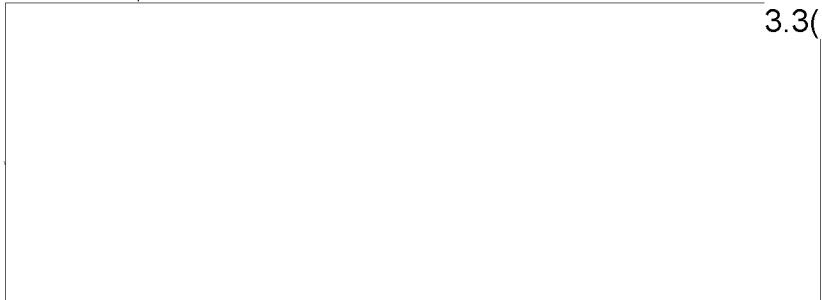
1. Communist China

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2. Yemen

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Some cryptic Yemeni messages intercepted on Wednesday suggest that the republicans were pressing then for new Soviet air strikes, but that the Soviets were stalling. There are other signs that the republican position in Sana is again becoming precarious.

3. United Kingdom

The latest Gallup Poll, published in London on Wednesday, looks bad for Wilson. It concludes that only 32 percent of the voters would now vote Labor, while 49 percent would support the Conservatives. This is a postwar low for Labor.

4. Cuba

Reports from Havana continue to tell of a new purge of Castro's opponents. Those arrested seem to have been pressing for more moderate policies, both at home and abroad. Some of the victims are old-line prerevolutionary Communists, presumably friends of Moscow. Others seem to be "moderates" from the middle echelon of the bureaucracy.

5. Chile-Argentina

President Frei has asked for US help in persuading Argentina to accept arbitration of an old territorial dispute between the two countries. The argument, over navigation rights through a channel near Cape Horn, has recently flared up again. Frei thinks it could even result in armed conflict unless something is done quickly to get the ball rolling toward peaceful settlement.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam



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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

The Liberation Front Abroad: Some Communist capitals are publicizing the reception of Front representatives as diplomats. For example, when the new Front representative in Peking presented his "letter of appointment" to Chou En-lai early this month, Hanoi radio quoted Chou as saying that Peking regards the Front mission as "an official diplomatic mission enjoying the same status as foreign embassies in the diplomatic corps in Peking."

Similarly, a new Front representative arrived in Berlin last week and received high-level treatment from the East German Government. Ulbricht described the representative's office as a "diplomatic mission."

There is as yet no evidence that other Communist countries intend to change the status of the Front representative. In the Soviet Union, for example, the Front representative is officially accredited to the Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee, although he frequently sees high-level Soviet leaders and attends diplomatic functions.

Accrediting the Front representative to a foreign government with the rank of ambassador is not a new move by Communist or leftist governments. Front delegations in Pyongyang, Havana, and Phnom Penh have enjoyed this status for some time--in the case of Pyongyang for more than a year.

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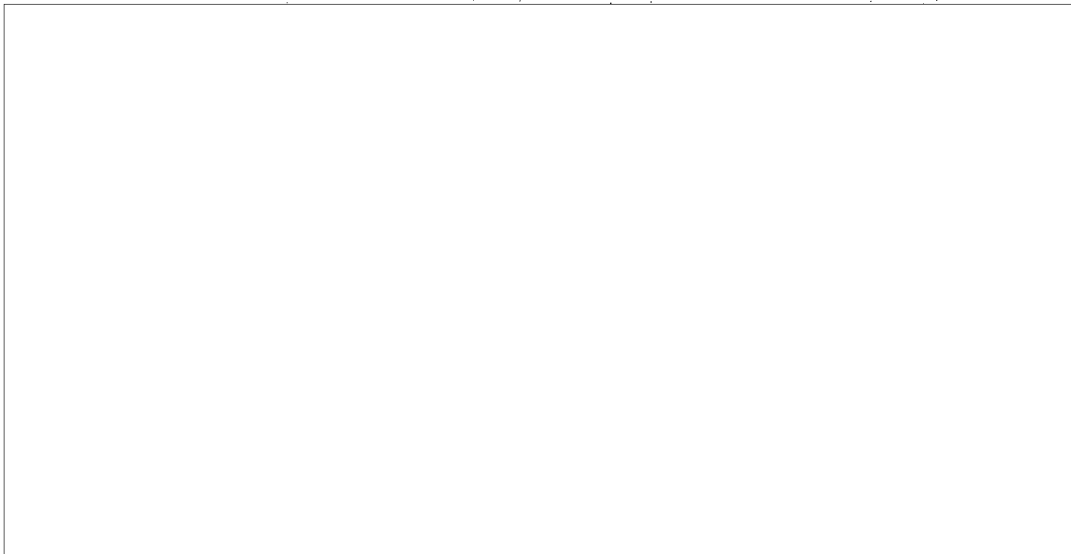
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Rural Food Situation: [redacted] refugees who recently left North Vietnam have reported that the food situation in the rural area was generally unsatisfactory to the people. The rural rice ration, as in the cities, was sometimes adulterated with wheat and other unpopular substitutes. Most other foods were in short supply and expensive; black market prices for all foods were much higher than state prices. Common consumer items such as matches, shoes, pants, shirts, hats, raincoats, umbrellas, charcoal, and kerosene were very scarce.

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French Delegation: The US Embassy in Paris has been informed by an associate of Waldeck Rochet, Secretary General of the French Communist Party, that Rochet will head a delegation to North Vietnam sometime in January. The purpose of the trip is to repay the visits of prominent North Vietnamese to France over the past two years. The embassy source expects the delegation to receive red carpet treatment in Hanoi and to have several "working sessions" with the North Vietnamese Party Politburo and individual meetings with members of the leadership. The source speculated that the war, and Hanoi's attitude toward next year's meeting of Communist parties in Budapest, will be discussed. The source also claimed

that the delegation intended to probe the Hanoi leaders on their precise position on talks following a bombing halt, and their conditions for negotiations.

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

Antiwar Protests: Hanoi, in an English language broadcast on 20 December, reported a series of recent statements and activities in the US which have been critical of the administration's Vietnam policy. The broadcast reported that some 1,000 Americans in Torrance, California, held a mile-long march on 17 December to protest the war, and that on the same day in New York, Senator Vance Hartke "condemned the US war in Vietnam and demanded the immediate withdrawal of US troops from the South." Protests by American Quaker groups and Negroes, as well as disruptive activities at draft induction centers around the country, were also reported without comment.

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Other Antiwar Activities: A similar broadcast on 19 December reported numerous antiwar activities taking place around the world. Demonstrations against US policy and involvement in Vietnam were reported in West Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, Mali, Yemen, and Australia. All this again was carried without comment by Hanoi.

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