

The President's Daily Brief

Top Secret 5 December 1967



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DAILY BRIEF
5 DECEMBER 1967

1. Cyprus

The first Greek troops to leave Cyprus should do so late this week aboard a ship sent to the island yesterday. As yet no one has raised the delicate question of how many Greeks must be removed before the Turks are satisfied that all are gone. For their part, the Turks have said that the first pullback of their forces would be in Thrace and there are some signs they are beginning to do so.

Makarios' belated and qualified "yes" to U Thant's appeal casts something of a shadow over the days ahead when bargaining in the UN will be difficult and frustrating.

2. Yemen

The Soviets appear to be doing more than just providing equipment to prop up sagging republican military fortunes.

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As the Egyptians have withdrawn, the royalists have come down out of the hills and are pressing the republicans hard.

3. Canada

The Canadians now have briefed NATO on the extent of the defense cuts they plan in their European commitment. As part of the campaign to trim spending, Ottawa intends over the next few years to reduce its air squadrons on the continent from six to four. The Canadians also plan to eliminate one of their two NATO-committed brigades in Canada, and they may apply the scissors to the 6,500-man army contingent now in Europe.

4. Soviet Union

A Soviet Foreign Ministry official says that Moscow expects the US to get tougher in Vietnam after Secretary McNamara leaves the Pentagon.

The Russian probed a US diplomat for the "real" reasons behind the Secretary's departure. He discounted the White House announcement as "propaganda." Noting that the Soviets held the Secretary in high regard despite their press attacks on him, the Russian official said, "We prefer dealing with a wise enemy."

5. Australia

Holt told Ambassador Clark that the small Democratic Labor Party will support the government on Vietnam. The DLP holds the balance of power in the Australian senate since the 25 November election, although it has only a handful of seats.

6. Ivory Coast

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Houphouet-Boigny is moving toward improved relations with the white-ruled states of southern Africa.

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[Redacted] Houphouet has long felt that unbending hostility to South Africa, Rhodesia, and Portugal is an exercise in futility.

7. Czechoslovakia

Czech leadership is split and some changes may be in the offing. Divided along conservative and liberal lines, the party hierarchy has been unable to deal effectively with Czechoslovakia's growing social and economic problems. The Central Committee meets shortly, and while President Novotny probably will remain in the saddle, he may have to throw some sacrificial lambs to the liberal faction.

8. Philippines

Constabulary troopers have bagged two senior Huk leaders in recent weeks. Yesterday they killed Domingo Yambao, a guerrilla chieftain operating north of Manila who went by the alias "Commander Freddy." Last month Zacarias de la Cruz was gunned down in Bataan Province. Also known as "Commander Delio," de la Cruz was considered the number three man in the Huk hierarchy.

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The Huks, however, have scored too. Last week "Commander Freddy" massacred an eight-man patrol. [REDACTED]

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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 Annual Soviet Effort to Persuade the US to Prolong the Projected Holiday Bombing Pause Has Begun: Last week a Soviet diplomat in London, speaking "personally," told a US correspondent that he felt the Soviet Union could persuade Hanoi to enter negotiations if the US announced no terminal date for the bombing pause.

In addition, a Soviet Foreign Ministry official recently assured a Western ambassador that Hanoi would agree to talks within three weeks if the US would stop bombing.

Similar approaches can be expected in the future, but there is no indication at this time that Moscow is acting at Hanoi's behest.

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[redacted] in Hanoi Report Experiences During Bombing: The [redacted] trade representative in Hanoi fired off a cable [redacted] just after the 17 November US raid. He reported that his living quarters had been damaged and a Vietnamese worker there was "severely wounded." There were no [redacted] casualties, however, and the "clean-up" was under way, he reported.

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Draft Age in North Vietnam: A North Vietnamese army prisoner recently captured in the South claims that boys in his home province have been drafted at age 15 since the first of this year. Another prisoner stated earlier that he was 14 when drafted in July 1966 and that all 14-year-old boys had received induction papers.

It is doubtful that North Vietnamese boys are generally being drafted at 14 or 15, though this may well happen in a few localities where local draft boards have trouble meeting their quotas. The legal draft age is 18 to 35. Analysis of North Vietnamese population figures suggests that this should be adequate. About 190,000 young men reach 18 each year, and roughly half of these are probably fit for service. The estimated 475,000 men already in North Vietnamese military service constitute only about eleven percent of the approximately 4.3 million men of military age.

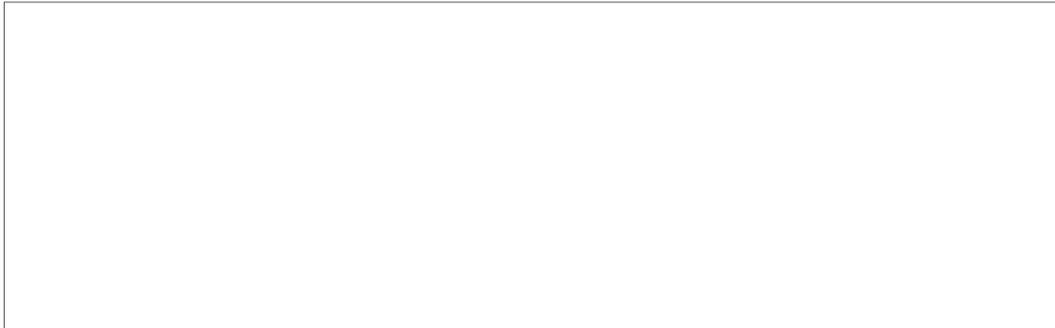
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A Report from Paris: The US Embassy in Paris has received one of the periodic reports on Vietnam provided by members of the Far East section of the French Foreign Office. The most interesting portion of the present report deals with Hanoi's recent request to have its "General Representation" in Paris upgraded to a consulate. According to the source, the French Government is reluctant to grant the request. (Consular privileges are presently exercised exclusively by the Saigon Consulate General in Paris.) The Foreign Office source reported that Hanoi's request is now "under study" and he claimed that legal obstacles may forestall a favorable reply for the time being. A favorable response at some future date was not ruled out, however.

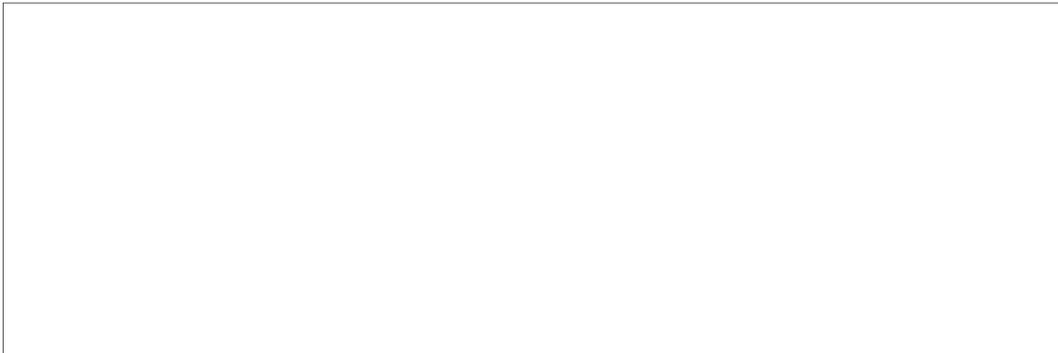
The source also reported that the head of the Far East section, Etienne Manac'h, will not stop in either North or South Vietnam during the course of his current Far East tour. The French representative in Hanoi, it was also reported, will be returning to Paris for a vacation this month.

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

Hanoi on Antiwar Movement: In a broadcast in Vietnamese to South Vietnam on 3 December, Hanoi pointed out that the antiwar movement has spread from the American public to the ranks of US troops. The broadcast listed a series of Vietnam protests allegedly mounted recently by present or former members of the US armed forces. These included a Veterans Day call by veterans of Korea and Vietnam for an end to the bombing, and the recent activities of the four sailors who jumped ship in Japan and are presently in the Soviet Union. Hanoi claimed that these demonstrations clearly indicate that the US people are increasingly more conscious of their responsibility toward their country and are determined "to prevent the ruling authorities from driving the US into disasters and dishonor caused by the war of aggression."

Hanoi on "War Crimes Tribunal" Verdict: Hanoi, in an international English language broadcast, has reported the "stern verdict" of the second session of the Bertrand Russell "War Crimes Tribunal" which closed last week. The broadcast reported that "the Johnson Administration is guilty of genocide in Vietnam," and that "its satellites in Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Thailand, and Japan are accomplices in this crime." The "unquestionable conclusions," according to Hanoi, constitute a "telling blow to the aggressors in Washington." The broadcast thanked all concerned for their assistance in bringing this session of the tribunal to a successful conclusion. It promised that the South Vietnamese people "will fight with still greater resolve" to defeat the "US imperialist aggressors and their satellites and hirelings, to show their gratitude for the due punishment meted out to the number one war criminals of our time."

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