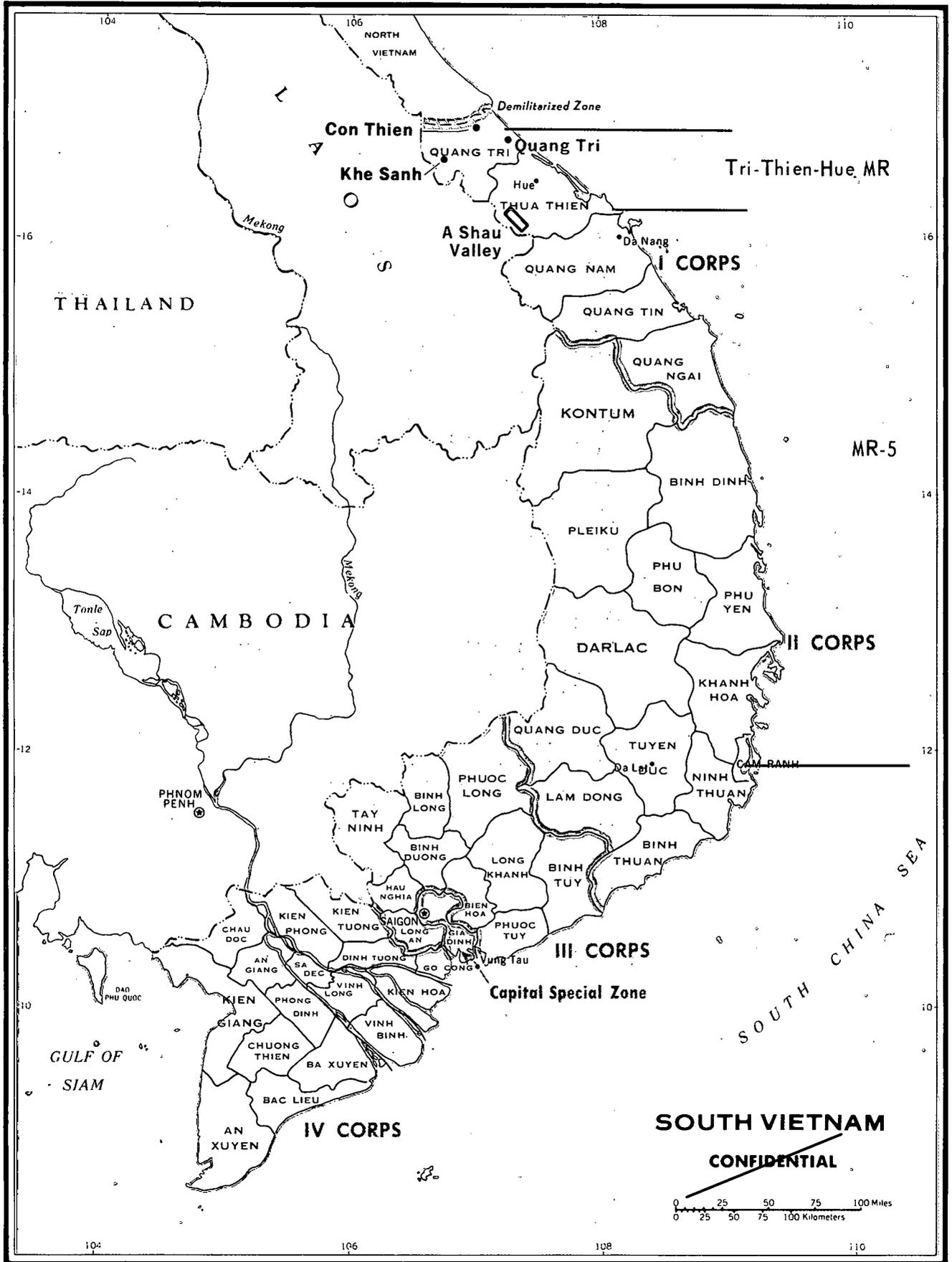


The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 19 December 1967



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DAILY BRIEF
19 DECEMBER 1967

1. South Vietnam

A captured enemy document suggests that the North Vietnamese will undertake a major military effort this winter in the heavily populated coastal areas of I and II Corps. The document also points to diversionary attacks around Con Thien. The main thrust, however, will come farther south in the enemy's Military Region 5 and the Tri-Thien-Hue military region.

The intent here would be to bring the war closer to South Vietnam's population centers and to create yet another battle sector in which to pin down allied forces and disrupt pacification efforts.

2. Eastern Europe

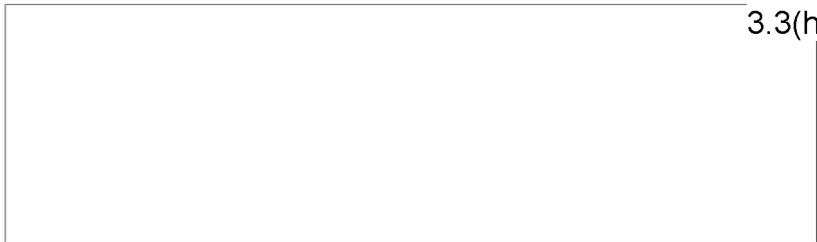
The meeting of European Communist foreign ministers in Warsaw today is the fourth such try at getting unified Communist support for the Arabs since the June war. Moscow undoubtedly hopes to stiffen the resolve of some of these countries which have been only lukewarm toward backing the Arabs, particularly with material support.

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Brezhnev will begin his visit to Egypt on 7 January, according to a Cairo newspaper. The formal announcement of the trip last month had said only that it would take place in "early 1968."

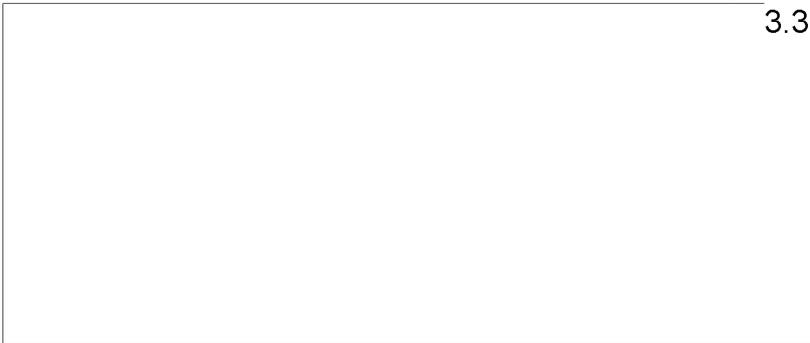
3. Soviet Union

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4. Soviet Union

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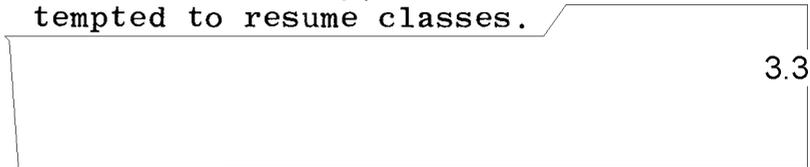
5. Communist China

Peking's efforts to get its "black-board jungle" under control have largely failed; the school system is still not really functioning.

(Schools at all levels were shut down last June so that the students could participate in the Cultural Revolution. By fall, some of the cooler heads in the leadership had decided it was time to try to get all concerned back to their books.)

Some major institutions, such as Peking University, have not even attempted to resume classes.

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Many other schools which did try to reopen were soon forced to close because of fighting among Red Guard factions.

In sum, the chances are slim that the leaders can get the schools operating again until they can set their own political house in order.

6. Yemen

There is little change in the military situation. Sporadic royalist pressure on a number of republican positions continues.

7. Greece

Stylianos Pattakos, Papadopoulos' right-hand man, sought out Ambassador Talbot at home Sunday night in an effort to persuade the US that the time is ripe to pick up working relations with the Athens regime. In essence, the Pattakos message is that the revolution is now completely in charge, that the King is still "loved" but the revolution is in no hurry to have him back, that revision of the constitution will go forward expeditiously, and that elections are likely within a year or two, with the leaders of the revolution probably heading the government party.

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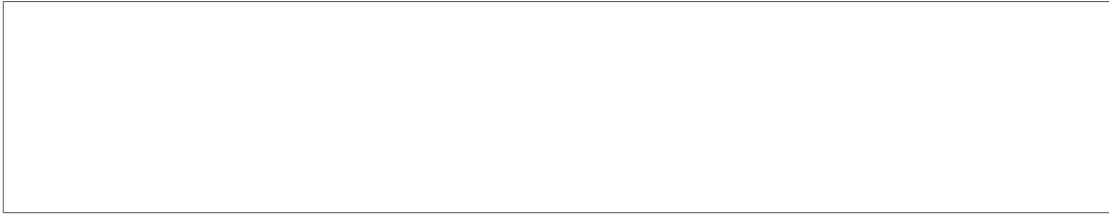
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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam



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16

19 December 1967

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

19 December 1967

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Front Spokesman Takes Tough Line: Nguyen Van Dong, a Liberation Front representative currently touring Scandinavia, brusquely dismissed any compromise solution in Vietnam during a televised interview in Oslo on 14 December. According to our embassy's account of the interview, Dong seemed unconcerned with bolstering the Front's political appeal, and devoted himself solely to insisting that the hard-line Communist position is correct. Dong stressed that only "our own terms" are acceptable as conditions for peace. He ruled out any role for the United Nations in bringing about a settlement because the UN is "under American domination." He denied being aware of any recent Front overtures to the UN.

Dong said the Liberation Front's terms for peace require "recognition of the Front's program and the withdrawal of all US forces from the South." He asserted the Communists were "on the way to victory" and that the US could not win the war. When asked about the likely duration of the war, Dong said the Communists will fight until "ultimate victory." Dong agreed with his interviewer that the terms he demanded amounted to an ultimatum.

* * *

Reaction to Bombing: The French news agency correspondent in Hanoi reports that recent bombings around the capital have "failed to affect the city's morale." He says the city appears calm and disciplined and attributes this to people becoming accustomed to the bombings as well as to the evacuation of large numbers of women, children, and the elderly. The correspondent also claims that people are resigned to a continuation of the bombings and that they anticipate greater destruction in and around Hanoi itself. Hanoi officialdom, he says, believes that recent discussions in the US about the need to attack anti-aircraft defenses, even in cities, is the prelude to attacks on cities, using the anti-aircraft targets as a pretense.

Liberation Front Anniversary: Both Hanoi and the Liberation Front have begun to issue the annual flood of propaganda connected with the 20 December anniversary of the founding of the Liberation Front. This year, much of the propaganda is focusing on the "Week of Solidarity with Vietnam" being held in many bloc and free world countries and timed to coincide with the Front anniversary. Several broadcasts have reported the activities of groups in the USSR, Poland, Cuba, Burma, Hungary, Australia, Finland, Denmark and other nations and have pointed to the worldwide nature of the movement as a demonstration of the "bankruptcy of US policy" and the support the Vietnamese people enjoy.

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Attitude of North Vietnamese Veterans: A [Redacted] refugee who recently left North Vietnam has provided one of the few reports on the attitudes of North Vietnamese who have fought in South Vietnam and lived to return North. The refugee told of one soldier who had been wounded in the South and who, after returning to the North, escaped from a local hospital. The soldier said he would not return to the South and claimed that the only things waiting for North Vietnamese soldiers there were "hunger, sickness, and misery." [Redacted] other soldiers who had returned from the South talked about the "terrible bombing" from B-52s.

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Food Rations and Prices in Hanoi: [redacted]

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[redacted] the rice ration ranges from 13 and one-half to 24 kilograms a month for adults, and is determined largely by the amount of physical labor they perform. [redacted] 40 percent of this ration must be taken in wheat flour. The black market price for rice is three to five times higher than the state store price. Fresh meat is rationed and although precooked meat, fish, and poultry is unrationed, it is scarce and expensive. Fresh fruit and vegetables are not rationed and are plentiful, but people are encouraged to make maximum use of their own gardens and plots.

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Viet Cong Comment on Truce Periods: The Viet Cong is continuing to propagandize the truce periods it has called for over the forthcoming holidays, contrasting them with the shorter truces called for by the allies. The Front has also warned the people to be on guard against allied violations during the truce periods. A 16 December broadcast, for example, told the Viet Cong forces that "the US aggressors and their henchmen in the past used to sabotage the suspension of military attacks by sending planes for spying and bombing liberated areas, shelling these regions, conducting nibbling attacks against the areas controlled by the Liberation Front, or carrying out provocative acts."

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

US Using the Mentally Deficient in Vietnam: Hanoi in a 16 December English language broadcast has claimed that the US is sending men who are suffering from mental or physical deficiencies as "cannon-fodder" for the war in Vietnam. The broadcast claimed that this policy was adopted to alleviate the "heavy casualties" the US is facing in Vietnam and the manpower shortage at home. Quoting US News and World Report, the broadcast reported that the US plans to draft 100,000 men once deemed unfit for military service, and claimed that this group included the mentally and physically deficient.

Hanoi on Senator Percy: Hanoi in its domestic broadcast has reported without comment Senator Percy's narrow escape at Dak Son. The broadcast quoted Percy as saying afterward that "I can assure you that I never had to take such a prone position as I have this time" and that "if the enemy desires it, everywhere can become a front line."

* * *

Messages from Captured US Pilots: North Vietnam has announced that starting on 18 December, Hanoi radio will broadcast in English to US servicemen on a daily basis messages from captured US pilots to their families. Three such messages were broadcast on the 18th.

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