

The President's Daily Brief

Top Secret 7 February 1968



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DAILY BRIEF
7 FEBRUARY 1968

1. Vietnam
(as of 5:00 AM
EST)

North Vietnamese regulars, spear-headed by nine armored vehicles believed to be Soviet T-34 tanks, were beaten back from the strategic Lang Vei Special Forces camp near Khe Sanh last night. The night-long assault was timed to coincide with a heavy bombardment of the Khe Sanh base. At last report the enemy force was pulling back.

This is the first time the Communists have used armor in South Vietnam.

The North Vietnamese could be planning another "first," this one using aircraft against allied positions near the Demilitarized Zone. Yesterday three of North Vietnam's eight IL-28 jet light bombers returned to Phuc Yen airfield from China, where they have been since last spring. Although the IL-28s are old and slow by today's standards, they could reach the Demilitarized Zone from Phuc Yen.

North Vietnam's AN-2 light transports also have been unusually active. Some of these aircraft are adapted for ground attack.

2. Korea

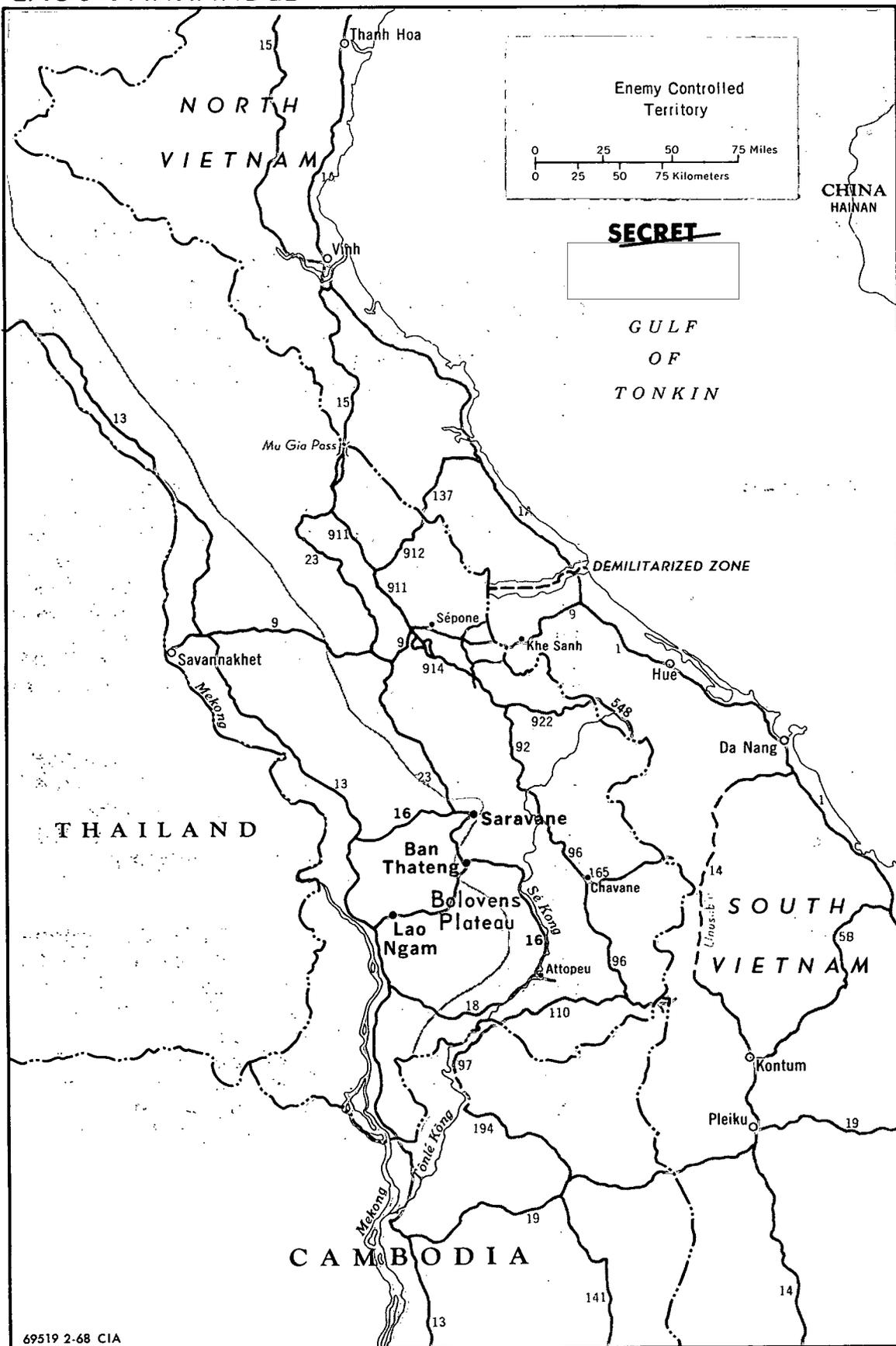
A number of South Koreans demonstrated against the Panmunjom talks this morning. The demonstration was at Freedom Bridge on the road leading through US lines to the meeting site. Some of the demonstrators got across the bridge where they were met and turned back by US troops.

There have been no significant developments in North Korea overnight. Pyongyang is rebroadcasting the sixth alleged confession by a Pueblo crewman.

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LAOS PANHANDLE



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3. Laos

A new series of Communist attacks on government positions in the Lao panhandle may be coming. A North Vietnamese defector reports the town of Saravane will be one of the first targets.

Saravane is the government-held position closest to the infiltration trails winding down to Cambodia and South Vietnam. Although it is not an important military base, its loss would have a serious psychological impact on the already nervous leadership in Vientiane.

4. Greece-Turkey

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5. Chile

Frei's left-wing political opponents in the Senate are so dedicated to seeing the Chilean President fail that they have sacrificed much-needed economic legislation to that end. Frei's enemies are looking ahead to the 1970 presidential election, but their determined inaction leaves the economy drifting further into serious inflation.

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6. Communist China

Two party veterans, both disgraced and dismissed early in the Cultural Revolution, were recently put in charge of Hopeh, the key North China province where Peking is located. This resurrection suggests a loss of ground by the militant group in the capital. Factional fighting, however, continues throughout China.

7. Soviet Union

The Soviets appear to be getting ready for another lunar probe. [redacted] and the position of Soviet space support ships suggest the launch will come today or tomorrow.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam



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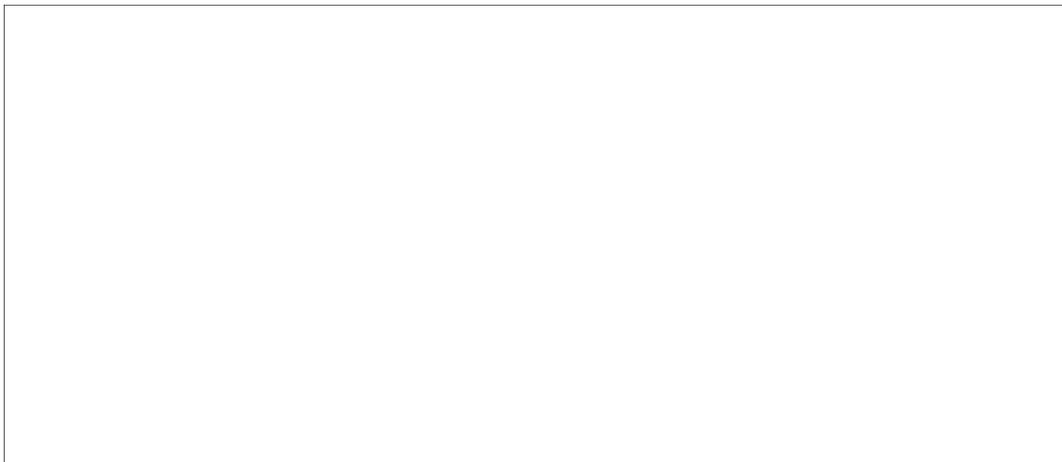
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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
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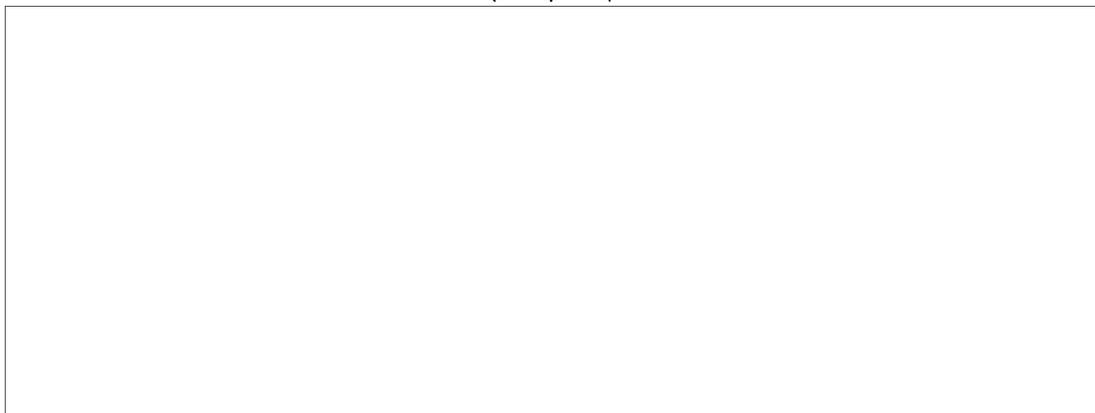
7 February 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION



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Viet Cong Press Conference: The Viet Cong attempted to capture foreign press attention on 6 February by calling an unusual press conference in Moscow. The purpose of the conference was to increase news coverage of the Communist version of the Tet offensive in South Vietnam. The Communists played up the conference by giving plenty of advance notice to the entire Moscow press corps, including US and other Western press representatives.

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According to a Reuters dispatch, the head of the Liberation Front office in Moscow claimed that the current military effort would get "fiercer" and that the Front already had "large areas of the country under the control of revolutionary power." He said there was no hope of any change in Communist demands for a peaceful settlement of the conflict and that any move in that direction was entirely up to the US. The main Communist objective in the new offensive was to overthrow the Saigon government and under no circumstances would the Communists consider participating in a coalition government with Saigon authorities. He closed the conference with a hard statement of Communist determination to fight until the US withdraws from South Vietnam and until the Communists have achieved "final victory no matter how long that takes."

The Communist spokesman also dredged up the old "foreign volunteers" issue. This has not been used extensively by the Communists for more than a year, and they appear to be using it at this time as they have in the past to dramatize their potential military strength. The Front man in Moscow said simply that the Communists have "every right to accept foreign volunteers if the time comes."

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Communist Claims of Popular Support in South Vietnam: After more than a week of claiming that popular support for their "general uprising" is "surging forward," the Communists have still failed to be specific, except in a few minor instances. The only new groups cited in Communist propaganda in the past three days are small groups of servicemen whom the Viet Cong claim have deserted from South Vietnamese Army units. In some cases both individuals and specific units are named. Most of these units are located in the northern coastal provinces, although one group of 31 was reported in a delta province. The only new nonmilitary groups claimed are an amorphous "federation of patriotic and peace-loving workers, farmers, and Buddhists in central Vietnam," cited in a Front broadcast of 3 February, and a "union of patriotic and peace-loving Buddhist servicemen in central Trung Bo" (coastal South Vietnam) reported in Hanoi's Nhan Dan on 5 February. There is no information to confirm the existence of these organizations.

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Hanoi Blasts US Tactics in South Vietnamese Cities: The Foreign Ministry in Hanoi issued a statement on 6 February condemning the US and its South Vietnamese "henchmen" for their "savage bombing" of heavily populated sections of Saigon, Hue, and other cities. The statement, which also charged that "poison gas" had been used in Hue, claimed that US and South Vietnamese attacks in the cities had caused death and injury to many civilians and the destruction of many homes and other buildings.

The Hanoi statement went on to appeal to "progressive mankind" all over the world to join the condemnation of the US and the "Thieu-Ky clique of traitors."

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

There is nothing of significance to report.

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