



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 2 December 1966



50X1

DAILY BRIEF
2 DECEMBER 1966

1. South Vietnam

Cambodia is complaining about Saigon's efforts to control shipping on the Mekong River international waterway.

Since mid-November, Saigon has required that ships bound for Phnom Penh via the Mekong must travel in convoy. The resulting delays have had a serious effect on Cambodia's oil supplies. The South Vietnamese defense ministry is reluctant to relax controls but is considering exempting oil tankers from the convoy requirement.

Cambodian officials--who accuse the US of inspiring the convoy system to harass Cambodia--have threatened to take their complaint to the United Nations. If Cambodia really starts feeling an economic pinch from these shipping controls, Sihanouk is likely to make strong representations.

Similar controls imposed by Saigon two years ago were ineffective.

2. United Nations



50X1

50X1

3. Canada

Ottawa is about to take another step toward recognizing Peking.

50X1
50X1
50X1

The Chinese Communists will surely respond by demanding a Canadian break with Taipei. The Canadians have rejected this in the past, but may now feel the time has come.

4. Laos

Former neutralist leader Kong Le is now in Djakarta, still loud and bitter over what he thinks was US responsibility for his ouster last October. Ambassador Sullivan is convinced that the real culprit in this affair is a discredited French military officer who was once Kong Le's adviser, but who has since been expelled by the Laotian Government and disavowed by his own commanding officer.

This Frenchman played effectively on Kong Le's weaknesses--he even went so far as to prostitute his own teenage daughter to the little general. Before his expulsion, the Frenchman was able to persuade Kong Le that it was the US which was behind pressures on him to make military improvements he had no stomach for.

5. Cuba

Havana has agreed to permit the departure of US citizens who want to get out of Cuba. This came in response to a Mexican approach to Havana and is subject to the condition that the Mexican Government must handle all the details.

There are upwards of 900 US citizens, with some 2,000 dependents, now in Cuba. The Cuban offer presumably does not apply to the 20 or so US citizens still in Castro's jails.

2 Dec 66

50X1

6. Soviet Union

Kosygin met the expected warm welcome when he arrived in Paris yesterday, but the result of his nine-day visit is generally expected to contain more sound than substance.

An idea of one thing on Kosygin's mind is revealed in the strong public blast he made today against the new West German Government. He seems out to create the impression that any improvement in Franco-German relations at this time would be at the cost of better relations with the Soviet Union.

7. India

Mrs. Gandhi's political future looks increasingly dim. One of her most powerful backers in the Congress Party [redacted] intends to work actively against her re-appointment as prime minister after the February elections.

50X1

Other important party leaders have likewise become antagonized over some of Mrs. Gandhi's recent actions. She seems in fact to have lost whatever political touch she might once have had. Ambassador Bowles feels opponents in her own party could succeed in dumping her in February.

If they try, however, the big problem will be to agree on a successor. The most prominent men in the running have strong rivals who seem at this point to cancel out one another.

8. Ecuador

A new crisis is coming to a head. Late press reports say the constituent assembly voted today to strip the officers who headed the recent military junta of their citizenship rights. Top Ecuadorian officers have been watching the assembly closely on this issue and have hinted that they would respond to such a vote with appropriate "countermeasures." Just what this means is unclear, but could include dissolution of the assembly or even a full military takeover.

2 Dec 66

50X1

Top Secret