

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 15 January 1968

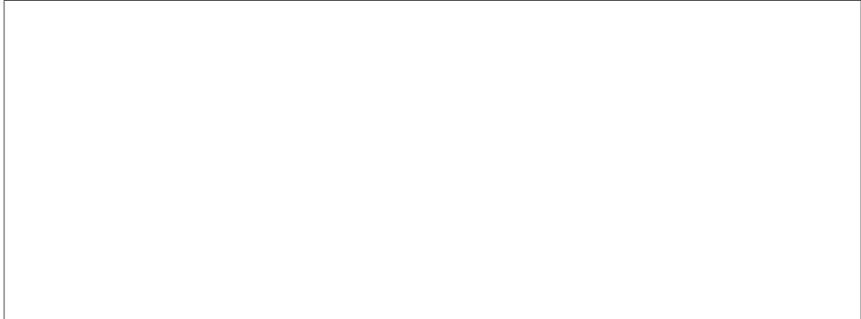


50X1

DAILY BRIEF
15 JANUARY 1968

1. Greece

50X1



2. Cyprus

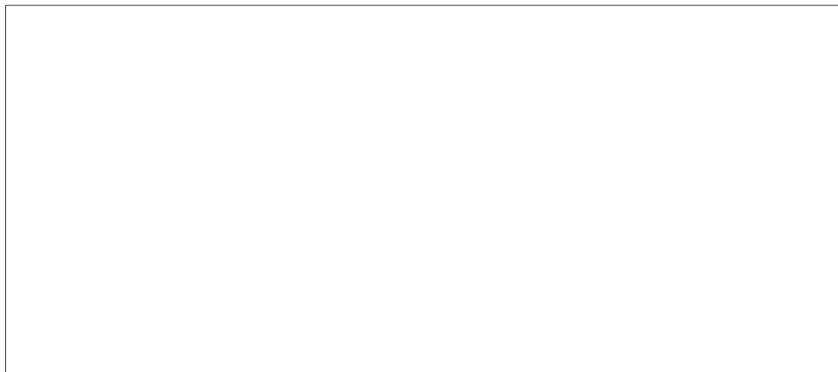
Makarios sounded almost like a statesman in his surprise announcement on Friday calling for new national elections. He warned Greek Cypriots that compromise will be necessary since "what is desirable" is not always "feasible." He seemed to be saying that his compatriots had best abandon their goal of union with Greece.

He spoke in a conciliatory way about the Turkish community and seemed to be calling for direct talks between the two communities.

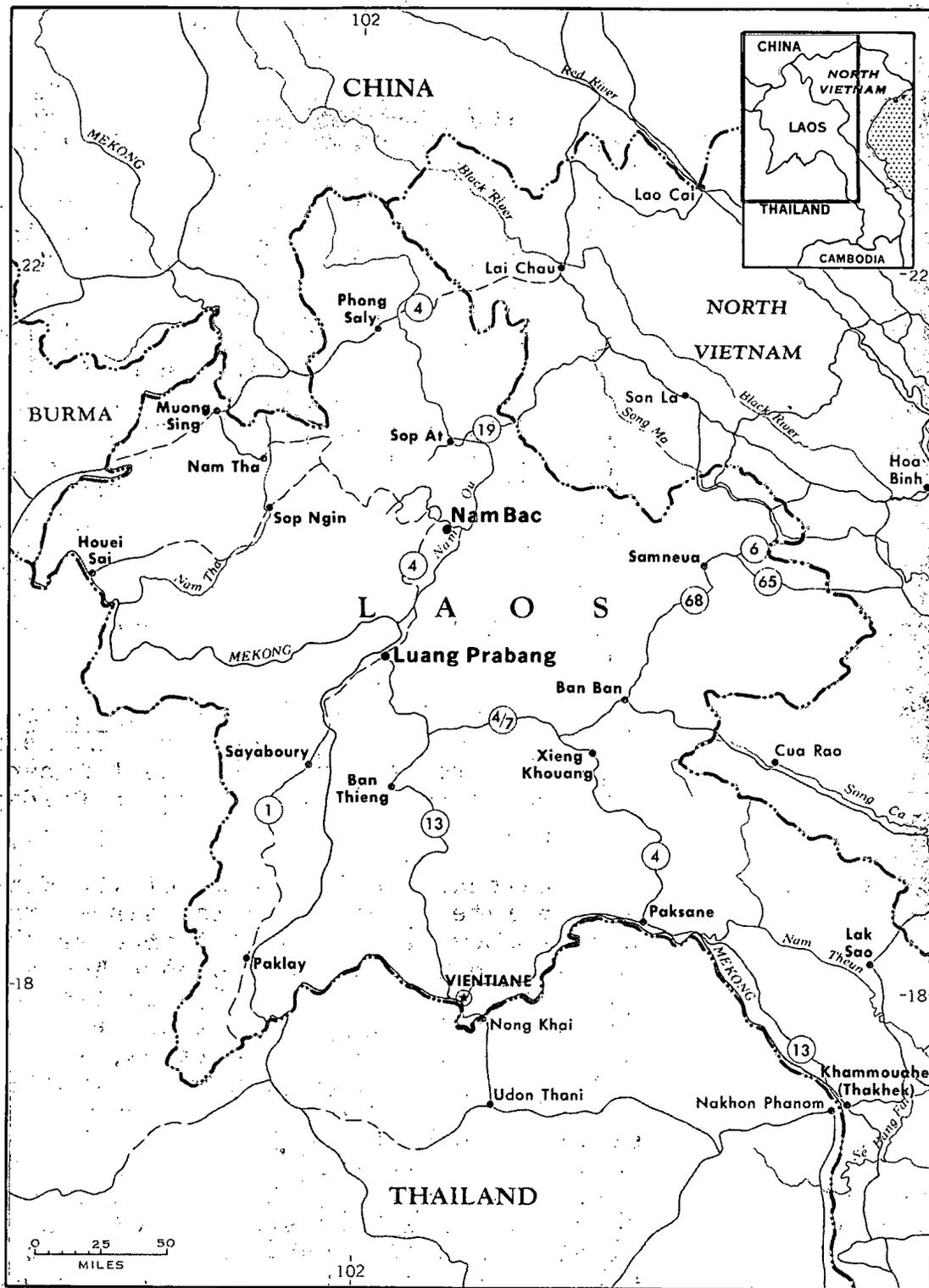
The flexibility and moderation of this talk is unusual for the capricious Archbishop and past experience with him makes us cautious. Still, it is a hopeful sign. He, of course, will be the only real candidate in the elections he has set for next month.

3. Jordan

50X1



50X1



69275, 1-68 CIA

4. Laos

The Communists have overrun the important outpost at Nam Bac. It was the culmination of a ten-month campaign to reoccupy an area they lost in August 1966 after having controlled it for nearly a decade. In another development, a small enemy force struck the airfield at the royal capital of Luang Prabang early today. It was a hit-and-run raid, possibly aimed at preventing movement of reinforcements toward Nam Bac.

These events do not mean that the Communists have launched a bigger offensive. The loss of Nam Bac is more a reflection of poor leadership within the Laotian Army. It may set off a new round of political maneuvering within the military for control of the armed forces.

5. Japan

Police are taking extensive precautions to cope with the massive demonstrations expected this week to protest the arrival of the USS Enterprise. The carrier, the first nuclear-powered surface vessel to visit Japan, is due in the port of Sasebo on Friday.

6. West Germany

50X1

7. West Germany -
Yugoslavia

Talks get under way this week on restoration of diplomatic relations broken more than ten years ago. Both sides are anxious to take the step despite the many contentious issues that will remain unsettled between them.

50X1

8. Soviet Union

Moscow has again gone out of its way to reassure its allies that there are no early prospects for improved Soviet - West German relations.

50X1

9. Yugoslavia

Tito has launched the long-awaited purge of party members opposed to his economic and social reforms. Some 400 people, mostly old ex-partisans and conservative bureaucrats, have been ousted from the Belgrade city organization.

Party liberals will now move on completely to dismantle the old political machine built by former party secretary Rankovic and to consolidate their control in preparation for the party congress scheduled for late this year.

10. Cuba

Castro was back in his old virulent style on Friday when he spoke at the closing of the international "cultural" congress he had sponsored in Havana. The speech contained his most violent attack on the US in many months; he seemed particularly angered at US efforts to "sabotage" Cuban trade deals with the West.

The Cuban saved some of his choicest words for the pro-Moscow Communist parties of Latin America. He accused them of acting like "pseudorevolutionary churches" in the "rearguard" of the anti-imperialist struggle.

50X1

Top Secret

Top Secret



FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam



Top Secret^{50X1}

16

15 January 1968

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

15 January 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Another Trinh Interview: Remarks attributed to North Vietnam's foreign minister in a recent, but undated, interview with a Bulgarian correspondent underscore Hanoi's contention that it has been on record for nearly a year as willing to talk with the US after the bombing is stopped. The interview, carried by the official Bulgarian news agency on 12 January, quotes Trinh as saying that a year ago he had "clearly pointed out that there will be talks" between North Vietnam and the US after a halt in the bombing and other US acts of war. These are not the words he used in his original "could" formulation, but instead are the ones of his less ambiguous statement of 30 December. The interview probably took place after 30 December, but this is not clear.

The wording in the Bulgarian interview suggests that while Hanoi is content to have the change in the Trinh formulation interpreted as an initiative on its part and thus put the onus on the US for the next move, it nevertheless wants to make clear that the substance of its position has not changed.

* * *

Viet Cong Reiterates Tet Cease-fire: In a communiqué charging that allied forces "deliberately distorted" Communist policy on holiday cease-fires and tried to limit their duration, the Viet Cong's news agency on 12 January restated the Communist decision ordering a seven-day "suspension of military attacks" during the Lunar New Year festival beginning 27 January. The communiqué said there had been "consistent violations" of the Christmas and New Year truces, and asserted that the US and its allies took advantage of the periods to conduct "mop-up operations" and to stage air attacks. It warned that violations of the forthcoming Lunar New Year truce would be "appropriately punished."

Query to North Vietnam: Ambassador Goldberg was informed by Emmet Hughes of Newsweek that on 6 or 7 January Hughes had sent a letter to the North Vietnamese Foreign Ministry asking for clarification of Hanoi's statement about its readiness to talk with the US. The letter contains ten detailed questions asking about the North Vietnamese terms for settlement of the conflict. Hughes said he would inform Ambassador Goldberg if he receives even the slightest response from Hanoi.

It is highly unlikely that the North Vietnamese will respond in any detail to Hughes' questions, although they may, as they have with other recent queries, repeat the foreign minister's formulation about being willing to talk if the bombing and other acts of war are stopped.

* * *

Hanoi Propaganda: North Vietnam's party daily, Nhan Dan, joined Chinese Communist media yesterday in condemning the alleged air attacks on Chinese territory near the Laotian border. The paper said this was a deliberate provocation against China by the US and its "Laotian henchmen," and is part of the US plan of war escalation in Indochina. Other aspects of this "plan," says the paper, include recent bombings of foreign ships in North Vietnam ports, strikes near the Chinese border, threats to invade Cambodia, and stepping up of the war in Laos. Hanoi's Foreign Ministry also issued a statement taking this line.

* * *

50X1

New French Correspondent: Embassy Paris says that the French Press Agency will be sending a new correspondent to Hanoi later in the month. The man's name is Le Mauff; he is an aeronautics expert, a specialty which might come in handy in North Vietnam. Le Mauff gives the impression of being pro-American. He is clearly anti-Communist.

Le Mauff revealed in talks with the embassy that not all material filed by his agency from Hanoi is self-initiated. Some stories are inspired by the North Vietnamese. In order to distinguish between inspired stories and regular reports, a code has been devised between the Press Agency representative in Hanoi and his home office. Le Mauff did not explain how the code works.

The new correspondent offered to provide follow-up details on his future articles. He suggested that this could be arranged through the French Press Agency's home office.

* * *

Hanoi Again Praises Russell "Tribunal": Hanoi radio reports that a meeting was held in the North Vietnamese capital on 11 January to "welcome" the success of the recent second session of the Russell "war crimes tribunal" in Denmark. The participants at the meeting sent a letter of thanks praising the tribunal for its "comprehensive and deep examination" of US "war crimes," and said the session was of great value in exposing US "aggression." The Vietnamese people, it said, "highly appreciate" the tribunal as "a valuable support and encouragement," and believe it helped "awaken the conscience of the American people and other peoples of the world" against US actions.

* * *

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

Hanoi on War Protests in US: In a brief round-up on 13 January, Hanoi radio's international service

again notes routinely various items connected with antiwar activities in the US. It claims the prosecution of Dr. Spock and others has "aroused strong indignation" in the US. The item notes comedian Dick Gregory's hunger strike protesting the war, and also mentions a Western news report about the four US sailors from the Intrepid who have been granted asylum in Sweden.

Top Secret