



The President's Daily Brief

2 December 1969

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

[Redacted] South
Vietnam. (Page 1)

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A member of Hanoi's Paris delegation has hinted that David Dellinger will be getting more names of American prisoners in North Vietnam. (Page 2)

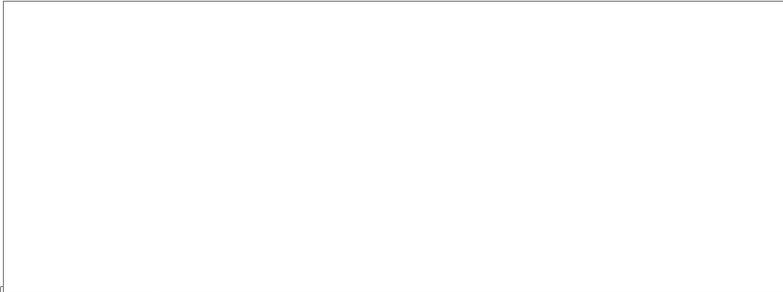
In Belgrade the regime is casting about for ways to bring news and cultural media under better control. (Page 3)

The Romanians expect the imminent Warsaw Pact meeting in Moscow to focus primarily on Bonn's new eastern policy. (Page 5)

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SOUTH VIETNAM



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NORTH VIETNAM

According to our Paris delegation, a western newsman recently received oblique confirmation from a member of the North Vietnamese delegation that the names of 59 American prisoners released by peace activist David Dellinger came "straight from Hanoi." The official insisted that North Vietnam will "never" supply names of prisoners directly to US Government representatives, but he said that he thought Dellinger "will be getting more names."

Hanoi has been under pressure from non-Communist quarters to ease its prisoner policies, at least to the extent of providing a full list of names and allowing regular correspondence with relatives. Mindful of the potential the prisoner issue has for fostering sentiment against the war in the United States, the Communists may now want to give critics of American policy an example of their alleged concern for victims of the war. Such a move might seem especially appealing to them at a time when alleged US atrocities in South Vietnam are making headlines.

Beyond these propaganda motives, North Vietnam considers American prisoners useful bargaining capital that will not be given up easily or soon. The Communists have long made it clear that they regard the prisoner issue as essentially a post-war matter, which they will not discuss, much less resolve, before the main issues of the war are settled. Even at that point, the North Vietnamese probably would hope to extract a price for returning Americans captured during the bombing years. There is evidence, for example, that they will try to link the prisoners with a demand for reparations for damage caused by US air attacks.

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YUGOSLAVIA

The regime is embarked on an effort that could lead to Communist Party censorship of news and cultural media. Up to now, Yugoslav media have been subjected only to loose post facto party controls, but on 26 November the party's executive bureau adopted a "special document" recommending that "democratic social machinery" be created to regularize the presentation of information. The document also calls for passage of a law laying down precise policy lines to be followed by censorship authorities at various levels.

The party feels obliged to take this action because of embarrassing articles and a play which in Tito's view went beyond constructive criticism and aroused his ire. The debates leading to the acceptance of this document indicate there is much concern about the idea of formal censorship. Adoption of a new law, incorporating more stringent guidelines is likely to be accompanied by controversy.

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RHODESIA

The new constitution, approved by referendum last June and passed by Parliament recently, was signed into law over the weekend. General elections will be held early next year, and Rhodesia will then become a republic without formal declaration. Final action on the constitution provides a measure of the confidence Rhodesia's leaders have that the country's economic and political isolation is nearing an end. Their optimism has been buoyed by the healthiness of the economy and the likelihood that the effects of UN sanctions will grow even weaker as time passes.

Under these circumstances, the Rhodesians see no need for any settlement with the UK. For its part, the British Government will issue appropriate expressions of dismay and may retaliate in token fashion.



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NOTES

Albania-USSR: Whatever hope there may have been for a reconciliation between Albania and the USSR was destroyed last Friday by party chief Enver Hoxha. In a speech marking the 25th anniversary of Albania's "liberation," Hoxha excoriated the Soviet leadership, denounced the occupation of Czechoslovakia as "the starting point for even bigger adventures" against Romania, Yugoslavia, and Albania, and decried "armed provocations" against Communist China. Thus far, the USSR has taken no public notice of Hoxha's remarks.

Romania - Warsaw Pact: Foreign Minister Manescu told Ambassador Meeker yesterday that he and Ceausescu would be leaving for Moscow today for the Warsaw Pact meeting. Although the meeting was ostensibly called to deal with the broad question of European security, Manescu thought it actually would be centered more narrowly on Brandt's eastern policy. Manescu also called to Meeker's attention Romania's refusal to participate in the recent Warsaw Pact statement on the Middle East, commenting that he saw no utility in condemning Israel.

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