



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 31 January 1968



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DAILY BRIEF
31 JANUARY 1968

1. South Vietnam
(as of 5:30 AM
EST)

At last word, Communist forces were continuing their attacks against various cities and key allied military and civil installations. In Saigon itself, sporadic sniping was continuing in various parts of the city well into the day, but many of the Viet Cong terrorists were withdrawing across the river.

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So far the area around Khe Sanh remains relatively quiet, but the Communist build-up there remains the most ominous in the country.

The spectacular series of Communist attacks seems designed mainly for the shock effect. The Communists are apparently out to demonstrate to all concerned that they are still a powerful force capable of seriously disrupting the country, if only temporarily.

The extensive harassment of US airfields, logistical centers, and command and communications centers appears designed also to inhibit immediate allied reaction and retaliation. It could be preparatory to or intended to support early Communist offensive operations just south of the Demilitarized Zone.

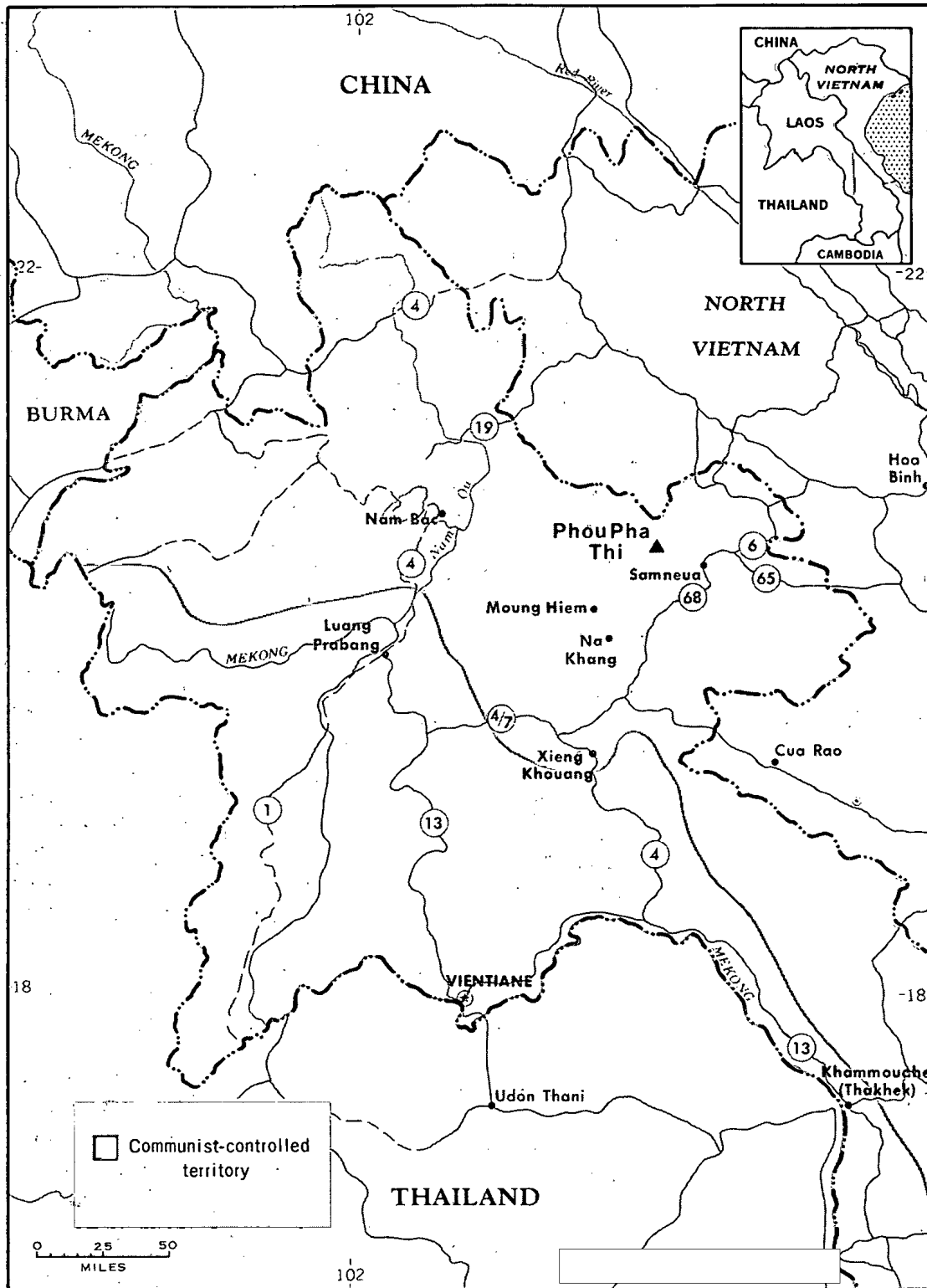
2. North Korea

The situation remains on dead center as Pyongyang continues to flaunt its determination to stand firm against US "machinations" in the United Nations and elsewhere.

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3. Laos

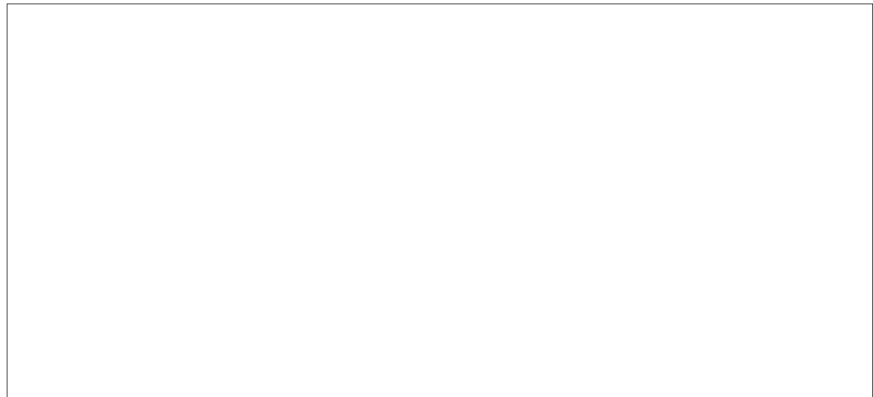
Signs are growing that the Communists are preparing for a major effort to drive government forces from the key counterinsurgent base at Phou Pha Thi. Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese troops have already taken up positions encircling the base, which provides important navigational support for US air operations over North Vietnam. (Map)

4. Cambodia



5. Israel-Egypt

Yesterday's heavy exchange of fire across the Suez Canal began after the Israelis halted an Egyptian survey attempt in the northern sector of the canal. Israel had given its okay for operations to free the 15 trapped ships near the southern end, but had warned Egypt against any operations in the north.



6. Yemen

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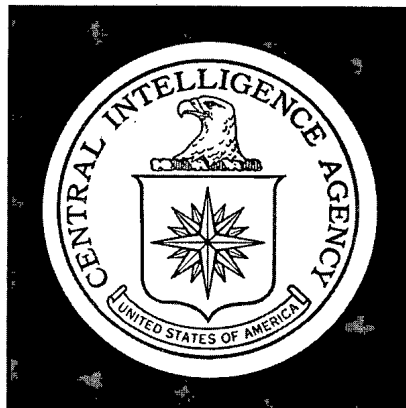
7. Brazil

Costa e Silva has evidently decided to take action against Carlos Lacerda, shrill critic of the administration and of the military establishment. The generals have been urging the President to throw the book at Lacerda this time, and he may do just that. If so, there will be a storm of public protest, but at least the generals will be happy.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam



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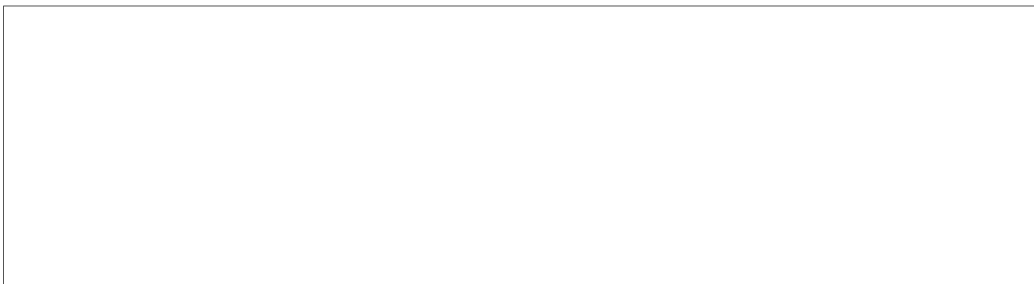
I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION



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Front to Open Office in Tanzania: The Liberation Front's continuing effort to improve its diplomatic representation abroad has taken another step forward. Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere announced on 29 January that his government has agreed to allow the Front to set up a permanent representation in Dar Es Salaam. When staffed, this post will be the first Front representation in sub-Sahara Africa, the third on the continent, and the fifth in the Free World. The Front also has representations or agreements for representations in all Communist countries except Yugoslavia.

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Foreign Visitors: Hanoi may be easing its restrictions of the past several weeks on admitting foreign visitors.

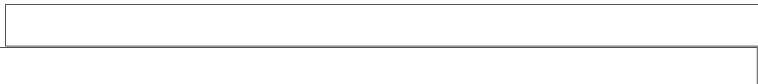
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Since early December the North Vietnamese had consistently turned down requests from foreign writers for permission to enter the country.

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Manpower:



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although the war had taken many of the young men away from the area, there were sufficient women and children to take their places on the farms; crops did not seem to have suffered. This report is in

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line with other information which has suggested that manpower problems are not yet a significant factor affecting agricultural production.

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

Nothing significant to report at this time.

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