

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 6 November 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
6 NOVEMBER 1968

1. South Vietnam

There are additional [redacted] signals from some South Vietnamese leaders that they believe it is time to modify the government's position against talking with the Liberation Front in Paris. While such signals may indeed indicate a softening of the government's position, they may also be intended to serve personal political ends. They suggest, for instance, that Ky is leading the way out of the dilemma.

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[redacted]
a council of government leaders including Thieu has accepted a formula proposed by Ky. This would involve sending a South Vietnamese delegation to Paris for "preliminary" talks but not for full-scale peace negotiations. If the Saigon delegation could hold direct talks with the North Vietnamese and get an agreement on the status of the Liberation Front representatives, the delegation would stay on for substantive talks. If not, it supposedly would withdraw.

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Meanwhile, as of Sunday, Ky was still preparing to go to Paris as chief of the delegation.

2. Peru

Velasco's troubles are deepening.

[redacted]
[redacted] his trigger temper and unimpressive public appearances are convincing more and more people that he is unfitted for the post of chief of state.

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Should he be forced out, the US Embassy expects a continuation of the military government, but under more reasonable management.

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3. Czechoslovakia

Liberals and conservatives seem to be heading for a test of strength. The first encounter may take place on 7 November when the Czechs will reluctantly commemorate the Russian Revolution. Conservatives are planning a nationwide display of strength, and they may clash in the streets with students and young workers.

Many Czechs believe that the hardliners, with Soviet support, will attempt to oust Dubcek when the central committee plenum meets on 14 November. Liberals, youths, intellectuals, and other supporters of reform are lining up to block such a move, and they seem to have the votes to do so.

The Soviet and East German press is giving propaganda support to the conservatives in increasingly strong terms.

4. Thailand

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Ambassador Unger comments that, while there is no evidence that Thanat will cease to be helpful regarding the present negotiations, underneath his official position he is bitter over what he sees as the first step toward a repetition of the Laos negotiations.

5. Soviet Union

It looks as if the Soviets will display several new tactical weapons systems at their annual parade on 7 November. The wraps will probably come off a new mobile surface-to-air missile launcher, a new tank, and a new assault gun. No new surface-to-surface missiles are expected.

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6. Berlin

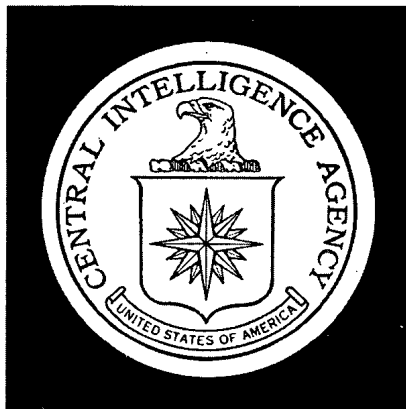
The leftist youth riot of 4 November was the most violent since Easter. The police used tear gas for the first time, but still suffered 120 injuries; the students were armed with everything from smoke bombs to Roman candles.

By provoking serious violence, followed by the inevitable charges of police brutality, radical elements may have fired up Berlin's youth protest movement again. The students had been relatively inactive in the past few months.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam

- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Demilitarized Zone Developments: Additional Communist elements have been noted pulling back from the Demilitarized Zone. On 4 November, the headquarters of the B-5 Front, the senior North Vietnamese authority in the DMZ sector, was located in North Vietnam about 16 miles north of its position two days earlier in the southern half of the zone. Another radio, believed to be serving a regimental size North Vietnamese unit, was also located in North Vietnam on the 4th, some 18 miles north of its location near Khe Sanh in mid-September.

References to the bombing halt continue to be noted in North Vietnamese communications. One message claimed that the halt was "the greatest victory ever." Other messages, however, warned Communist units to guard against unwarranted optimism because "final victory" must still be sought.

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Hanoi Broadcasts: Radio Hanoi has broadcast reports of Communist attacks on some cities in the South since the bombing halt. These accounts have so far not differed basically from several battlefield communiqués broadcast prior to 1 November. They attempt to portray a business-as-usual attitude toward the fighting in the South.

In international English language broadcasts on 4 November, Radio Hanoi described Viet Cong mortar attacks on My Tho city, Loc Ninh, and Cai Lay as attacks against "enemy positions" rather than as against the cities themselves. Similarly, Communist shellings of Bien Hoa and Ben Tre were carefully cast as attacks against the airfields in those cities rather than as attacks against the provincial capitals themselves.

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Communist broadcast facilities have not yet reported accounts of enemy actions against Quang Tri city and Vinh Long city, both of which occurred on 2 November.

The careful wording in these communiqués may be calculated to provide the Communists sufficient room to deny direct military actions against population centers as opposed to military targets. There are no suggestions, however, that they intend to refrain from attacks in populated areas.

* * *

Reaction to Aerial Reconnaissance: Hanoi protested continued US reconnaissance and "intensification" of the war in South Vietnam in a Foreign Ministry statement yesterday. The statement charged that this "proves" the US is persisting in "aggression" and encroachment upon the sovereignty and security of North Vietnam. It called for an end to such actions, but like other statements since the bombing stopped, it put the demand in the longer term context of a settlement and did not present it as a condition for continuing the Paris discussions.

* * *

New Missile: North Vietnam may be employing a new or modified surface-to-air missile in an attempt to deal with high-flying US reconnaissance aircraft. An intercepted message passed on 25 October from a regimental headquarters in Hanoi to a SAM support facility ordered the assembly of "18 number-two type missiles and fuses." The same support facility was again alerted on 27 October that a unit familiar with the new fusing techniques, and containing the necessary troops, equipment, and instruments, would arrive to assemble the missiles. The message further stated the missiles were to be in the hands of firing units by 29 October.

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

There is nothing of significance to report today.

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