

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 28 November 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
28 NOVEMBER 1968

1. West Germany

Britain's ratification of the Non-proliferation Treaty is not going down very well with the Germans. Their main complaint is that the British acted with indecent haste in light of what the Soviets have done in Czechoslovakia. The Germans themselves had hoped to hold off signing or ratifying the treaty until next year, perhaps after the parliamentary elections next fall. Now they may have to act before German public opinion is ready and before divisions over the treaty among the Christian Democrats are ironed out.

In addition to questions of timing, Bonn still has problems over some of the treaty's implications. The Czechoslovak invasion has made the Germans more anxious than ever to hold open the "European option"--control of nuclear weapons by a European combination. They also want reassurances that the treaty will not change NATO strategy and that West Germany could withdraw from the Nonproliferation Treaty if NATO ever broke up.

2. Japan

Sato came through his stiffest test for reelection as party leader with a surprising margin of victory.

This will strengthen his hand in dealing with the Okinawa reversion problem and a wide range of national security issues. Good politician that he is, Sato now intends to form a new cabinet which will better represent all the party's factions.

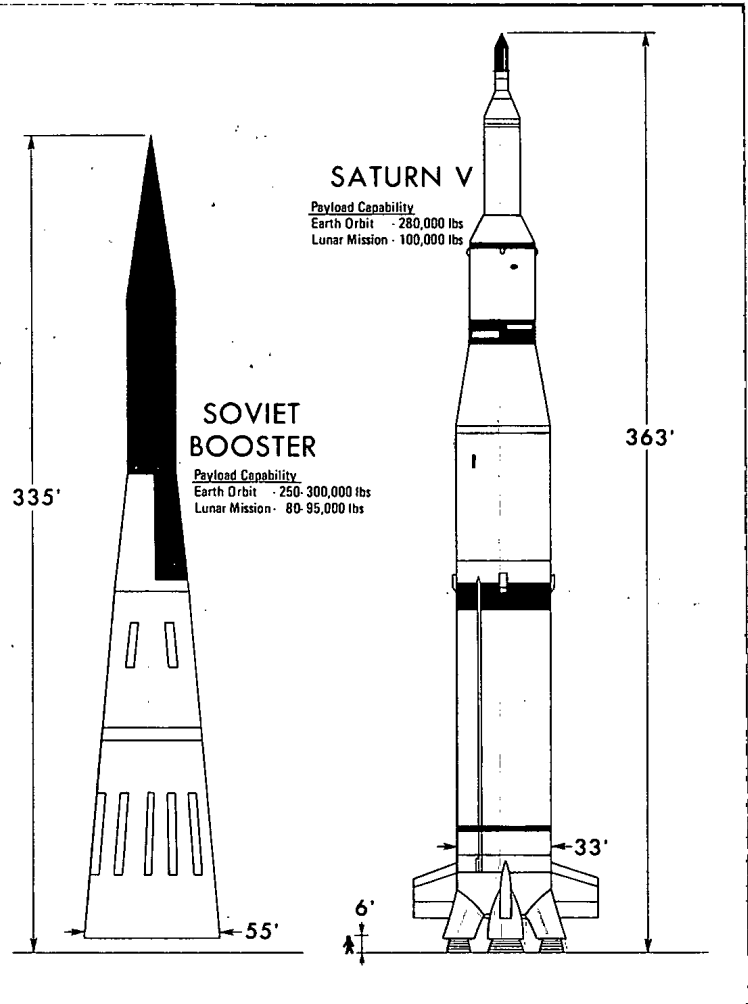
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New Soviet Booster Nears First Flight Test

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Comparison of Soviet booster with US Saturn V



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3. Panama

Followers of ousted President Arnulfo Arias are intent on setting up a guerrilla movement in the mountains of western Panama. For some days they have been filtering in from Costa Rica and now, together with local recruits, they may number upwards of 200.

By most standards this is small stuff. Remote western Panama, however, is Arias' home territory and a stronghold of popular antimilitary sentiment. It is just possible that this may be the beginning of a long-term problem of some magnitude for the colonels in Panama City.

Arias and his entourage in the US are lobbying hard from Washington's Watergate Hotel. Senators Thurmond, Tower, Kennedy, and Smathers have so far been among those approached. Arias seems particularly anxious to get his views across to people close to President-elect Nixon.

One of Arias' talking points is that the colonels who threw him out are Communist influenced. They are surely no great democrats, but we have no evidence that they have put any Communists into key positions.

4. Soviet Union

Work is proceeding at the Soviet moon port at Tyuratam toward the first flight test of the new space booster. The huge booster has been photographed by satellite on its launch pad three times since August. A recent satellite mission, however, showed that it has been returned to the nearby assembly and checkout building. It is difficult to say when the first flight test will take place--it still could be several months away.

5. South Vietnam

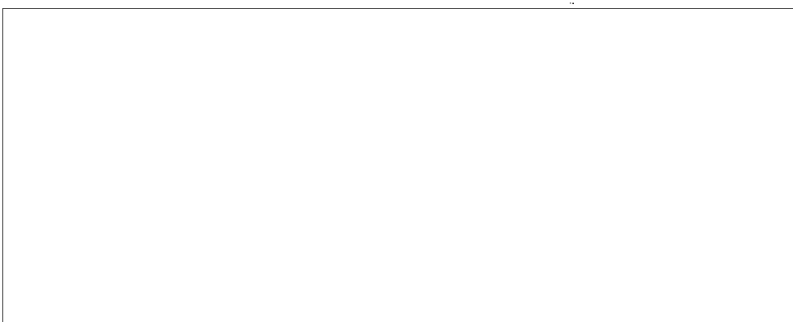
The next few days may bring some scattered mortar and rocket attacks in several areas. The indicators are most extensive in the western highlands, but some signs of impending offensive operations also are appearing in several parts of I, II, and III Corps.

6. Arab States -
Israel

Jarring leaves for the Middle East next week for another go at trying to involve the Israelis, Jordanians, and Egyptians in talks. None of the interested parties thinks he will have much luck. About all they seem to agree on is that Jarring should persevere.

The Jordanians are particularly bearish while the semi-official Israeli press predicts no break in the stalemate until the new administration takes over in Washington.

7. Communist China



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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of US 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

North Vietnamese High Altitude Defenses: Further evidence of the importance the North Vietnamese attach to downing the SR-71 reconnaissance aircraft was reflected in a recent message from a surface-to-air missile battalion near Hanoi. The unit reported it had been able to pick up and track the SR-71 while other units had been unable to do so. (This could be an indication that this unit has been equipped with the modified radar which the Soviet Union has introduced in recent months.) The missile battalion also reported that all units should continue to practice because the destruction of the SR-71 was of extreme importance.

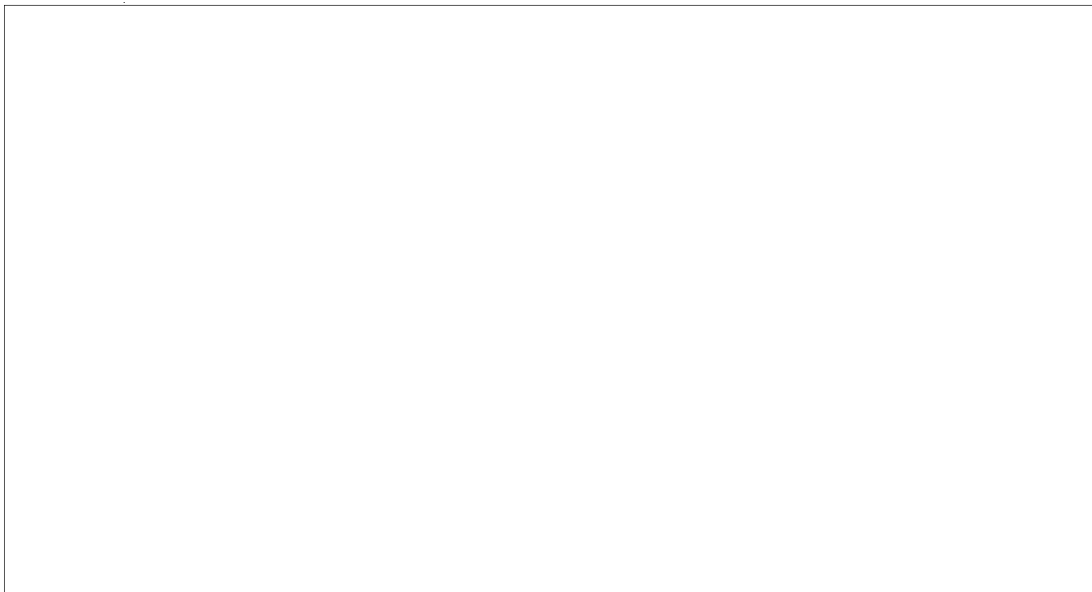
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Rice Crop in Trouble: The tenth month rice crop has ripened a week late this year, according to a 22 November Nhan Dan article. The article claims that the main cause for concern is "slack leadership over farming work by many party and administrative echelons and village cooperative managerial boards." Reportedly meetings have been postponed and cadres sent to help harvest the crop.

The tenth month rice crop normally constitutes about two-thirds of the average annual 4.5 million ton rice harvest. North Vietnam has suffered successive shortfalls in its rice crops since 1966. Cold weather earlier this year caused the late planting of the tenth month crop--usually harvested by mid-November--and three tropical storms during late summer caused widespread flooding in the important rice growing Red River delta region. There has been no indication of significant food shortages in North Vietnam's cities. Imports of foodstuffs have increased steadily during the past few years, however.

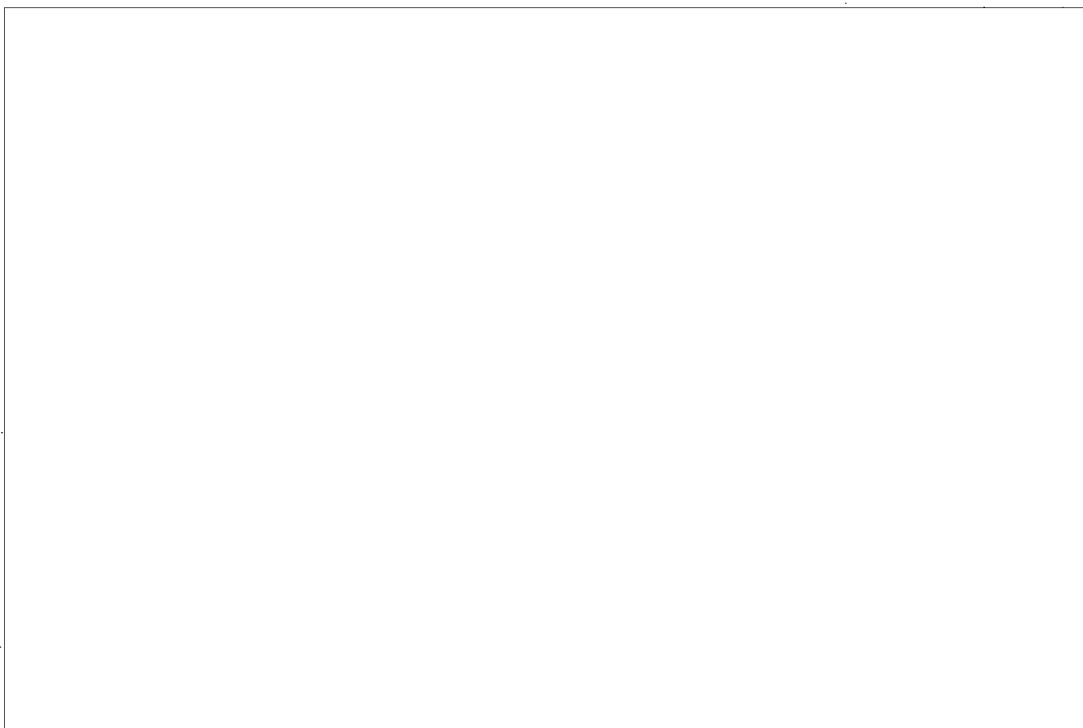
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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL
ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing of significance to report to-
day.

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