



The President's Daily Brief

2 January 1971



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Peking's New Year pronouncement is cautious in its claims of progress. (Page 1)

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[Redacted] (Page 2)

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Venezuela is making tentative moves toward bringing Cuba into the inter-American system. (Page 3)

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COMMUNIST CHINA

Peking's New Year pronouncement, appearing as a joint People's Daily - Red Flag - Liberation Army Journal editorial on 31 December, is remarkably cautious in its claims of progress. For example, although party building at higher administrative echelons has been the first order of domestic business for the past year and a half, the editorial contains little self-congratulation over the pace of the program and fails even to cite the formation of four provincial party committees, the first to be formed since the Cultural Revolution. Its call for unity and organizational discipline, reiterating a theme first issued at the Ninth Party Congress in April 1969, and its appeal to senior cadres to follow Mao's revolutionary line "still better," attest to the complexity of personnel and policy problems still plaguing party building and to the regime's frustrations over continued political squabbling in some locales.

The editorial's stock-taking of improvements in Peking's international position is surprisingly limited. It pointedly ignores China's achievements in the diplomatic field, such as recognition from Canada and Italy and the favorable UN vote. Instead, it trots out Peking's favorite "betes noires"--US-Soviet collusion and Japanese militarism--as well as examples which allegedly bear out Mao's statement on 2 May that revolution is the sign of the times. As in last year's editorial, Moscow's revisionist policies are declared to be bankrupt, but this time recent events in Poland are cited to point up the "deep crisis" in Eastern Europe.

Although the New Year statement is vague on the timing of the National People's Congress, which is expected to serve as a forum for unveiling the central government apparatus and a new five-year plan, the editorial struck a positive note in announcing that 1971 would be the first year of the Fourth Five-Year Plan. Predictions for the economy were even more modest than last year, however, and there were no claims that current planning would generate another "great leap forward."

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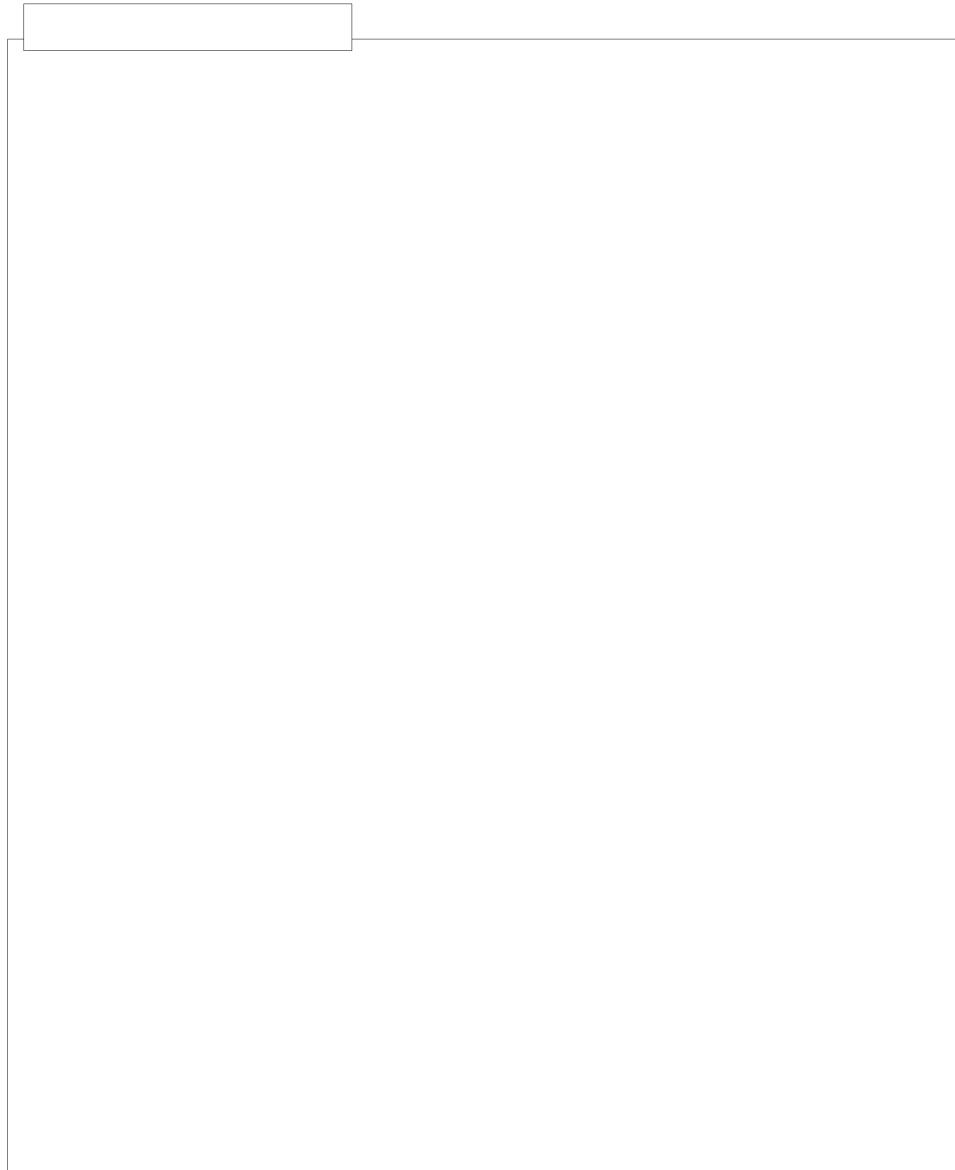
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VENEZUELA

The secretary general of the governing party said at a press conference this week that the Organization of American States should allow governments to re-establish relations with Cuba if they want to do so. This could be done, he said, now that "Castro has changed his conduct with regard to the interference in the internal affairs of other countries." Earlier, the Venezuelans had suggested that Trinidad's Prime Minister Williams explore the possibility of a rapprochement with Cuba, saying that Venezuela would follow Trinidad's lead.

These are only tentative moves, but they suggest Venezuela is considering seriously steps that could be taken to bring Cuba into the inter-American system. Caracas played an important role in the 1963 OAS decision to isolate Cuba and has steadfastly backed this policy since. A change of Venezuelan policy could prompt several Latin countries to follow suit.



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NOTE

Laos: In northern Laos, an estimated 200 enemy troops have attacked elements of a government irregular battalion deployed about eight miles north of Ban Ban. There were no government casualties, but the irregulars were forced to withdraw to the north and east. In addition, late reports indicate that enemy forces yesterday overran several government outposts about seven miles northwest of Ban Ban. In the south, enemy attacks forced the abandonment on 1 January of three small sites on the southern rim of the Bolovens Plateau, which had been manned by some 200 locally recruited irregulars.

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