

The President's Daily Brief

27 November 1969

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

27 November 1969

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

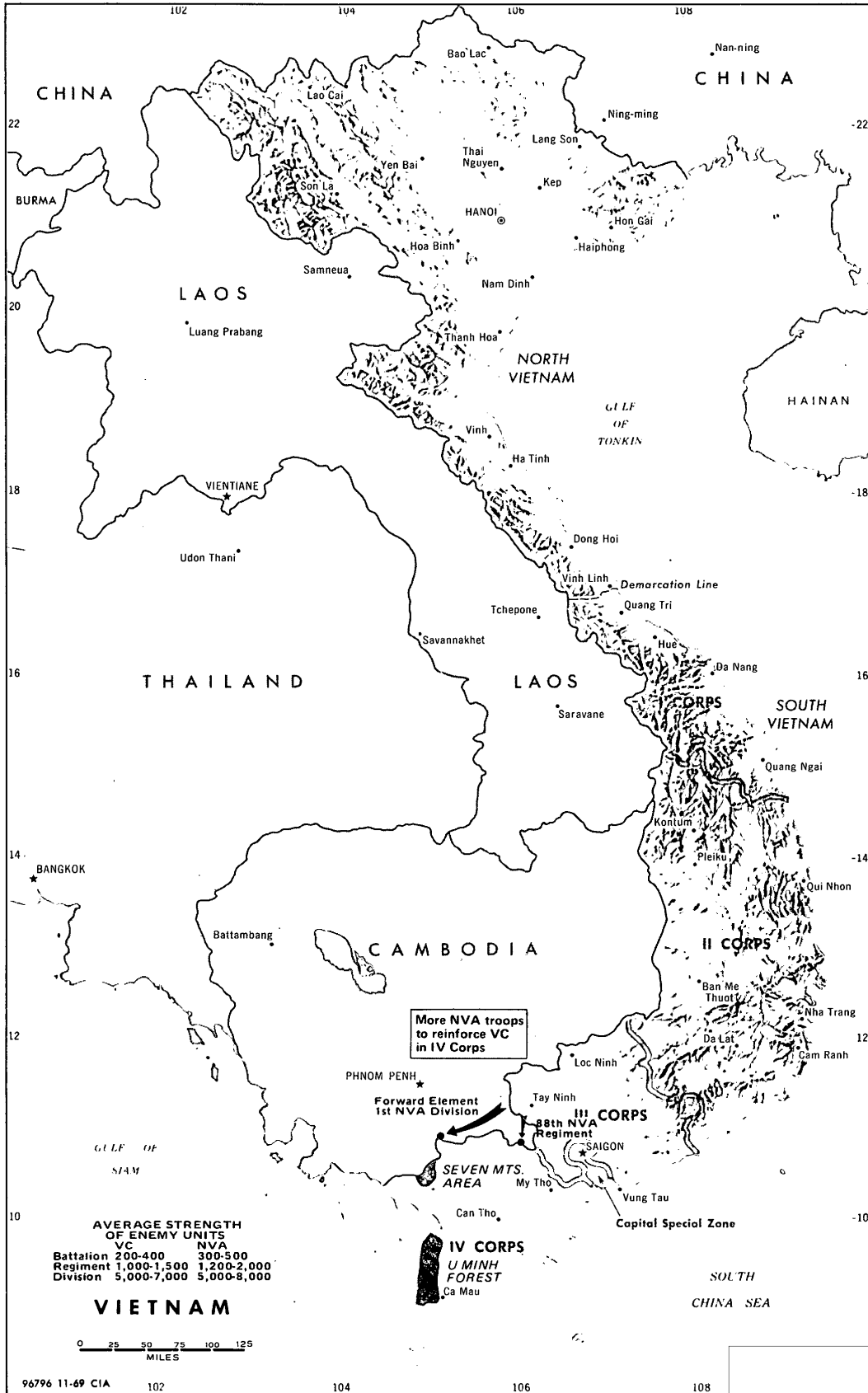
President Thieu's critics will use the Song My massacre incident to further their own political ambitions. There are more indications that the North Vietnamese are reinforcing the Viet Cong in IV Corps. (Page 1)

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Bonn plans to sign the Nonproliferation Treaty tomorrow. (Page 4)

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SOUTH VIETNAM

The South Vietnamese Government's casual handling of the Song My massacre case has left it extremely vulnerable to criticism by opposition elements. Official statements have minimized the likelihood that a massacre took place and have shown little interest in any further investigation of the incident. A spokesman for President Thieu has stated that the government "classified it as an act of war" and considers the case closed.

This apparent insensitivity has provided Senator Tran Van Don a ready-made issue to embarrass the government and to further his own political ambitions. In his capacity as chairman of the Senate Defense Committee, Don has announced his intention to organize an independent investigation of the case.

Don, a political opportunist, apparently hopes eventually to achieve power by providing a bridge between the allies and the Communists. Recognizing the delicacy of this strategy, he has denied that he wishes to furnish propaganda assistance to the Communists but insists that the government should not have taken any position until it had more facts. This same theme may be exploited by additional opposition elements amenable to the "Third Force" concept.

* * *

Evidence is accumulating that the North Vietnamese are sending more combat troops to reinforce weakened Viet Cong units in IV Corps. The North Vietnamese 88th Regiment has moved 18 miles south of its former position near Tay Ninh Province, and is now located along the border between Cambodia and western IV Corps. The shift makes it appear likely that the 88th will join two other regiments which during the summer were the first large North Vietnamese units ever sent into the delta.

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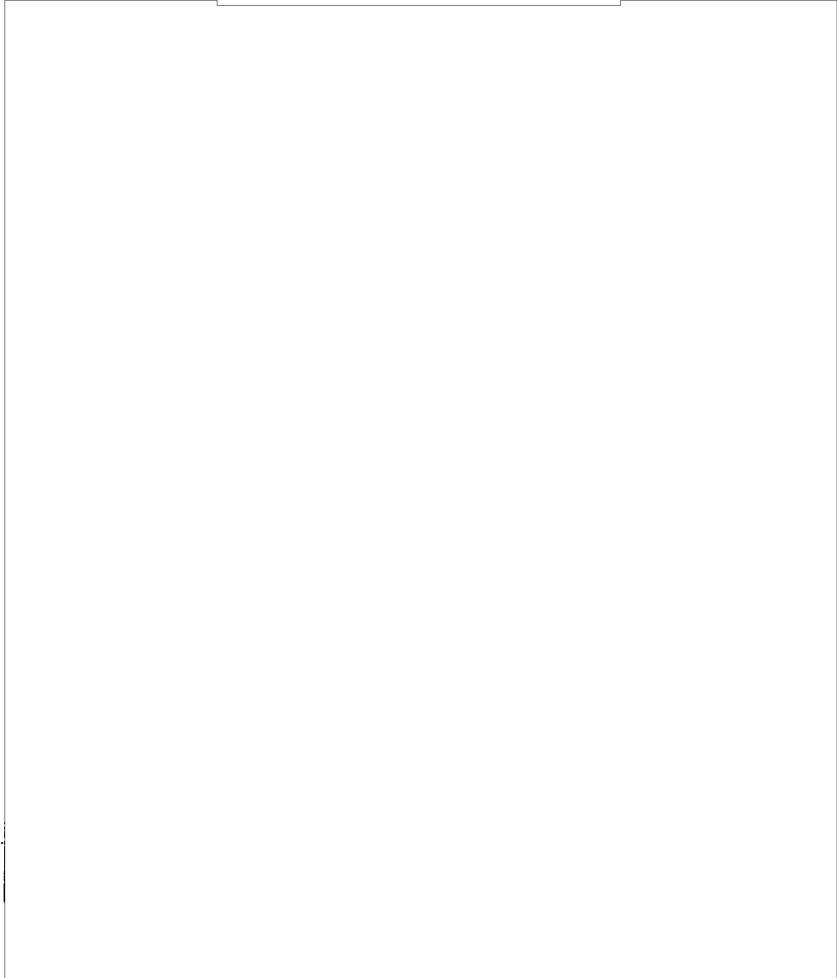
In addition, a forward element of the North Vietnamese 1st Division has been shifting south and west along the IV Corps - Cambodia border recently.



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If two more North Vietnamese regiments and a division headquarters are incorporated into the enemy force structure in the delta, it will mean still greater tests for the South Vietnamese units that have taken over main defense of that region. Increased enemy pressure has been evident in the area in recent weeks, but so far the South Vietnamese appear to have been generally effective in containing the major Communist threats in the U Minh Forest area in the far south and in a mountainous section along the Cambodian border in the west.

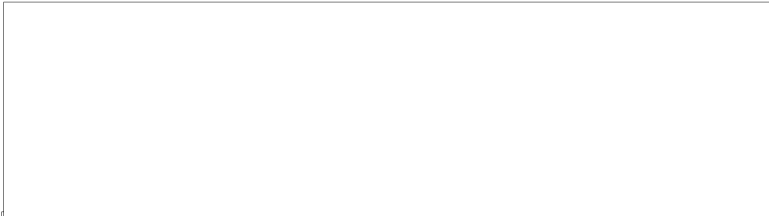
North Vietnam:



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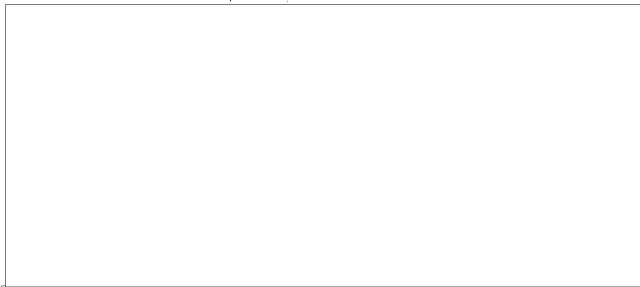
COMMUNIST CHINA - NORTH VIETNAM



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WEST GERMANY

Bonn has decided to sign the Nonproliferation Treaty without further delay, according to the West German disarmament commissioner. Assuming all goes well during today's final Bundestag committee debate, the way apparently will be clear for final cabinet approval and formal signature on Friday.

The decision to act promptly appears to be motivated by a desire on the part of Chancellor Brandt to attend the upcoming European Community summit and the NATO ministerial meetings with German signature an accomplished fact. Undoubtedly another important consideration is the favorable impact that German adherence is expected to have on Communist receptivity to Bonn's Eastern policy.

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NOTES

Japan:

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Lebanon: A majority of the newly formed Karami cabinet is generally associated with a pro-fedayeen parliamentary bloc and can be expected to take a conciliatory position on the role of the fedayeen in Lebanon. The government may try to gloss over the fedayeen issue, however, in hopes of encouraging national unity and forestalling further disturbances. Meanwhile, control of Lebanese security matters will remain in the hands of the army, even though Kamal Jumblatt, a long-time fedayeen supporter, was appointed to the key post of Minister of Interior.

East Germany - West Germany: Trade between the two governments is expected to reach a record level of \$925 million this year. Additional sales that are not officially recorded would boost the total volume of trade even further, to about \$1 billion. This would represent a one-third increase above the 1968 level and is due largely to expanded East German purchases of West German commodities. Although East Germany admits an increase in inter-zonal trade, Pankow is reluctant to publish such data because it is trying to discourage its Warsaw Pact allies from expanding their relations with Bonn.

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