

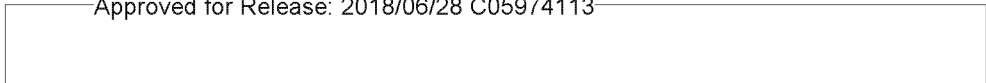


The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 10 November 1967



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DAILY BRIEF
10 NOVEMBER 1967

1. South Vietnam

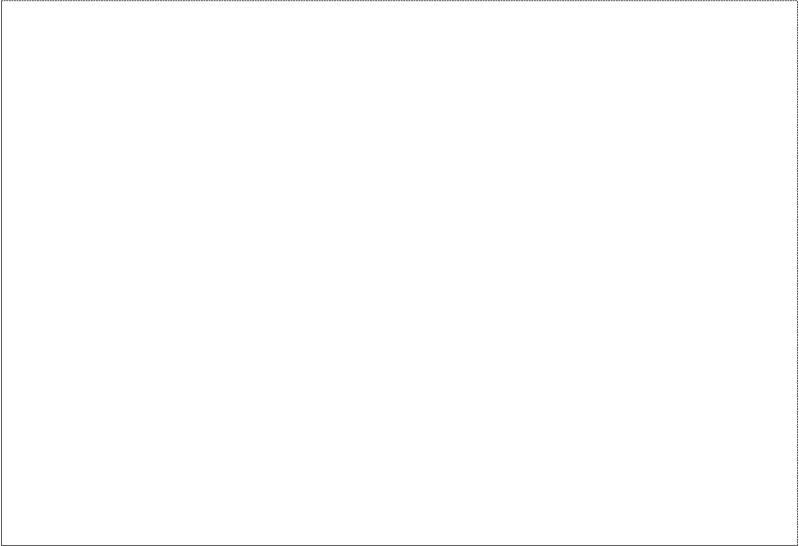
The new cabinet appears to be a competent one. Of the 17 ministers named, nine have served in the previous government. All key posts--defense, interior, revolutionary development, foreign affairs, and economy--are held either by generals or those who served in the Ky government.

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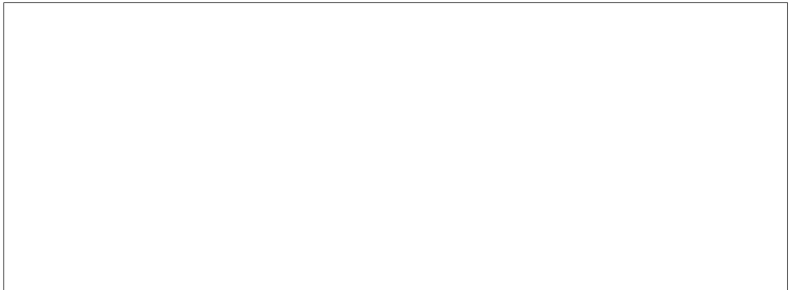
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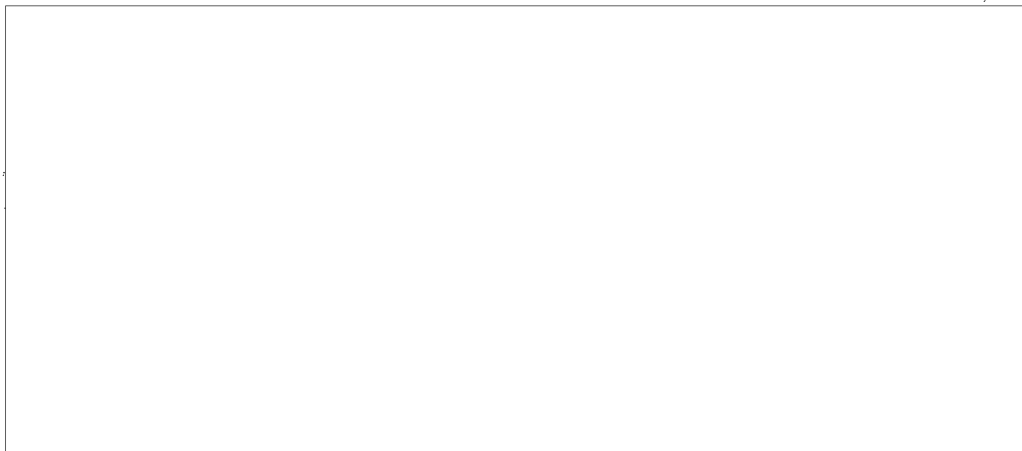
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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

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Ho Misses Celebration: Ho Chi Minh played no role in the rather elaborate Hanoi ceremonies surrounding the 50th anniversary of the Soviet Revolution. His only contribution to the occasion was to write a bland article on the revolution for the Soviet party paper. Given the importance the Communists have attached to this anniversary, Ho's absence from the festivities is unusual and suggests that illness may have prevented him from attending.

There was no reference to Ho during the festivities. At meetings and receptions where he would normally play the key role as head of state or perhaps more importantly as a living link with the period of the revolution, his position was filled by the insignificant and aged Vice President Ton Duc Thanh. Further evidence of Hanoi's reluctance to associate Ho with the anniversary is the failure to give any public notice to his receiving the Order of Lenin from the Soviets. Presentation of the same award to Ton Duc Thanh was publicized.

During the past several months, Ho has been reported to be in poor health and resting outside of Hanoi. His erratic pattern of appearances in the past nine months has also suggested that he is ailing. He has made only three public appearances in recent months--the latest at North Vietnam's national day on 1 September.



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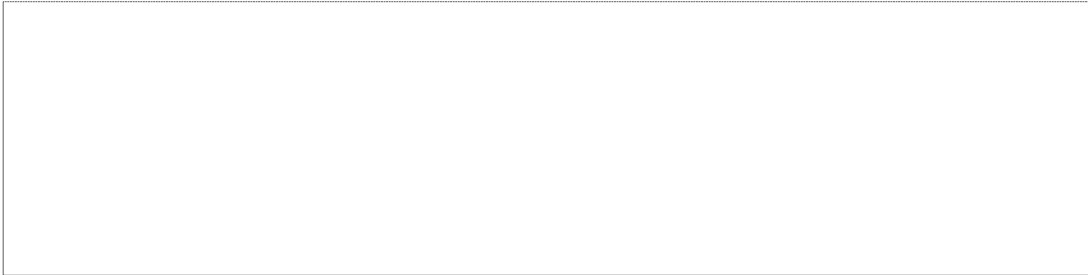
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Despite Ho's inactivity and his apparent aloofness from the political scene, there has been no indication in the past year that his subordinates have had any difficulty in running the country without his immediate leadership and direction. The evidence also suggests that the regime's major policies--particularly on strategy for the war and on possible peace negotiations--are the result of collective decision-making and are not dependent on Ho's presence.

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

Hanoi on Antiwar Activities in US: A Hanoi Vietnamese language broadcast of 8 November reports that a group of writers and journalists have signed a statement expressing their determination not to pay 23 percent of their taxes as a protest against the war. The statement reportedly urges the American people to join in refusing to pay their taxes. The broadcast also notes that a group of professors at Iowa University has issued a statement urging the US to end the "aggressive war" in Vietnam. Hanoi quotes the Toronto Star as revealing that about 75 American soldiers have deserted to Canada and that about 6,000 Americans have sought refuge from the draft in Canada.

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