



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 5 January 1968



3.5(c)

DAILY BRIEF
5 JANUARY 1968

1. South Vietnam

[Redacted]

3.3(h)(2)

Buddhists of both factions are trying jointly to form a political party that would operate behind prominent Buddhist politicians. While both moderate and radical Buddhists are interested in this approach, it is questionable that they could resolve their own differences long enough to make an effective team effort.

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2.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam



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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Hanoi Moves with Care: North Vietnamese propaganda has not followed up on Foreign Minister Trinh's remarks that North Vietnam will talk to the US if the bombing and other acts of war against the North are stopped. Hanoi doubtless is pleased by the world-wide attention the statement is receiving and the implication that this initiative puts the "ball in the US court." Nonetheless, the North Vietnamese seem bent on sticking precisely to the Trinh formulation and on not having it distorted or embellished by others.

Hanoi's insistence on precision is underscored by an announcement from the North Vietnamese mission in Paris on 4 January. This announcement sought to clarify a Western correspondent's account of an interview with a spokesman for the mission the day before. The correspondent reported that the spokesman had "confirmed more clearly than ever that Hanoi is willing to open peace talks at once" if the bombing is stopped. In response to a question about whether the negotiations would be fruitful, the spokesman, according to the correspondent, remarked "we are ready, the next step is up to President Johnson." In its clarification yesterday, the North Vietnamese mission in Paris stated that a spokesman had confirmed the Trinh statement and it quoted the relevant sentences. It tersely added, however, that the rest of the correspondent's story "is pure invention."

Similar precautions about sticking to Trinh's formulation are evident in Soviet handling of the subject. Moscow reported the crucial portions of the Trinh speech without comment in its domestic and international broadcasts on 2 January. A story from a Soviet correspondent in Hanoi on 3 January uses the same language

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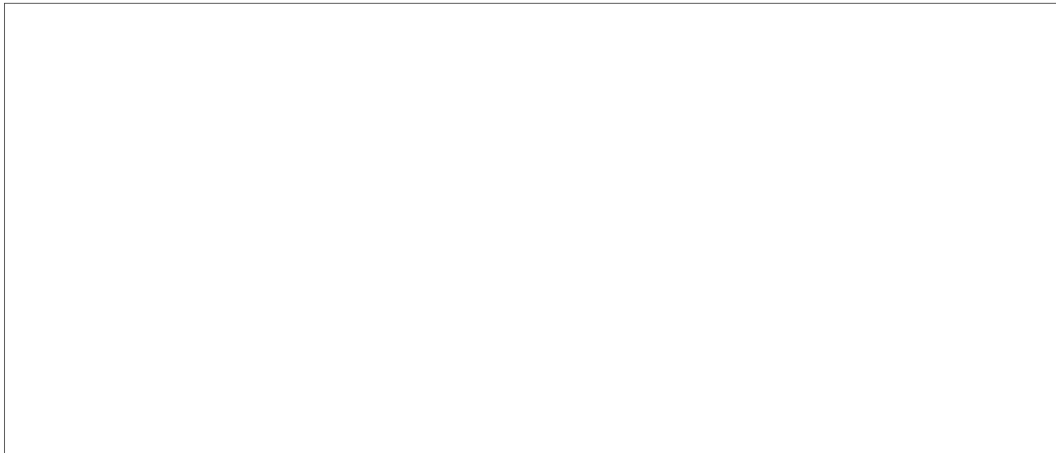


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Ho Calls for "Thrift, Production, and Combat":
According to a 31 December Hanoi broadcast, Ho paid tribute and pointed out "shortcomings" in government work during the past year to a year-end Council of Ministers' meeting. The work of the people's armed forces and communication and transportation forces came in for praise. Ho, however, criticized the management of labor and financial resources. The usual exhortations were made by Ho concerning performance in agriculture and animal husbandry. New efforts were called for during 1968 "to satisfactorily fulfill the state plan." To start the New Year out right, Ho described the situation during Tet as one of "thrift, production, and combat."

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The basic unit is the regiment which normally has six to ten batteries equipped with guns of varying calibers. [redacted] made no reference to the four Chinese antiaircraft divisions stationed in North Vietnam.

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Regimental formations are used to protect such targets as airfields, major rail or highway bridges, industrial installations, or medium-sized cities. Several regiments are used to protect major targets such as Hanoi or Haiphong.

Each battery is responsible for preparing two or three gun emplacements and one dummy site--all thoroughly camouflaged. The report gives an example of tactics in citing the experience of one unit defending the city of Vinh. This regiment had 13 gun batteries and in seven months conducted 205 redeployments between its 80 prepared emplacements.

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In combat, the regimental commander attempts to concentrate his fire on a single group of aircraft or even one individual aircraft. [redacted]

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[redacted] that the North Vietnamese have had difficulty in coordinating fire between batteries and note that this problem is receiving a great deal of attention both in training and during combat.

US tactics which have created problems for North Vietnamese gunners include high-speed maneuvering at low altitude, varying flight altitudes in approaching and leaving targets, and electronic countermeasures.

Information from the same report on North Vietnam's fighter aircraft defenses will be dealt with shortly in the Special Daily Report.

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Rail Repairs: Bombed rail lines are usually repaired in a few hours, reports one of the Spanish refugees [redacted]

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[redacted] He said civilians of both sexes and all ages are mustered from villages near the damage and work the clock around until they get the job done. The villagers are not paid and must provide their own food. Most of the work is hand labor.

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[redacted] he has seen as many as 10,000 people conscripted for work gangs.

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

There is nothing of significance to report.

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