



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 5 March 1968



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DAILY BRIEF
5 MARCH 1968

1. Vietnam

The Communists launched rocket and mortar attacks against several targets in northern and central South Vietnam the night of 3-4 March. There were only a few follow-up ground assaults, and allied casualties and damages were insignificant.

The heaviest concentration of attacks came in the three southern provinces of I Corps. The two northern provinces--Quang Tri and Thua Thien--were relatively unscathed, but Communist military preparations are continuing there. The Communists are building their forces around Quang Tri city and Hue, and there are reports that tanks and large quantities of ammunition are being moved toward Hue from the A Shau Valley.

2. Panama

The shaky compromise worked out yesterday between the two factions is holding up so far.

The legislature went into recess this morning after appointing a three-man commission to look into the impeachment charges that have been levied against President Robles. This was part of the deal worked out yesterday by the two sides under National Guard pressure. The commission is supposed to declare that the charges are unfounded, and Robles, for his part, is to appoint a new, "nonpartisan" cabinet and amend the electoral code.

The legislative commission has to report back within ten days, and it may do so as early as today. If everyone plays the part assigned to him in this complex scenario, a donnybrook between Arias and Robles supporters may still be averted.

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3. Eastern Europe

Communist leaders in eastern Europe are having their troubles.

While Czech Premier Dubcek tries to counter efforts by Novotny conservatives to rally the workers against Dubcek's "intelligentsia," the Gomulka regime in Poland finds itself on the verge of a confrontation with dissident intellectuals.

We even have signs of factionalism within the rigidly Stalinist regime in Albania. [REDACTED]

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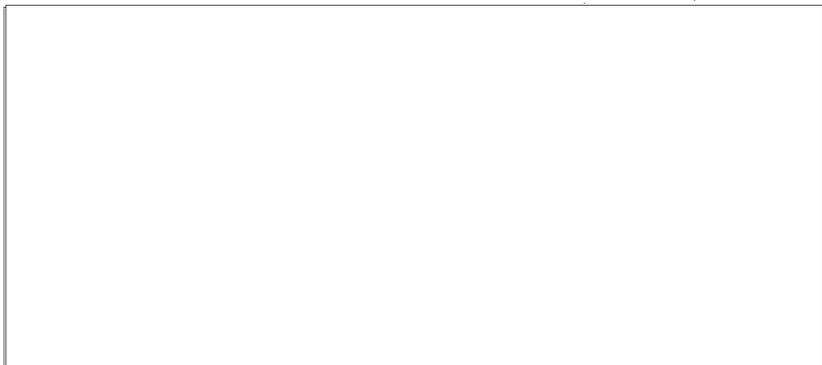
[REDACTED] The country's top leadership has been out of sight for almost a month, which leads us to suspect that the purges may be reaching higher into the hierarchy.

4. Warsaw Pact

Wednesday's meeting of pact leaders in Sofia seems likely to produce another collision between the Soviets and the Rumanians, this time over the draft nonproliferation treaty.

The Soviets, whose delegation will be led by Brezhnev, Kosygin, and Defense Minister Grechko, very badly want unanimous endorsement of the draft by pact countries. The Rumanians are still holding out. They criticize the draft's failure to place limitations on nuclear powers or to provide guarantees to non-nuclear countries.

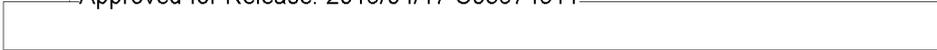
5. Greece



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6. Soviet Union



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7. Egypt

Nasir apparently feels he must do something about the unrest which led to demonstrations in February. He is trying the tried-and-true expedient of blaming the demonstrations on "counter-revolutionary elements." He has even implied that the US may be behind these elements. This ploy is unlikely to placate many Egyptians, whose unhappiness is rooted in Egypt's defeat last June.

8. Berlin

The Soviets have an air/ground military exercise scheduled for Wednesday in the Berlin area. The exercise could interfere to some extent with allied access to West Berlin, and there could be some low-level overflights of the city. This activity may be intended to coincide with the current Bundestag committee meetings in West Berlin.

9. Britain-USSR



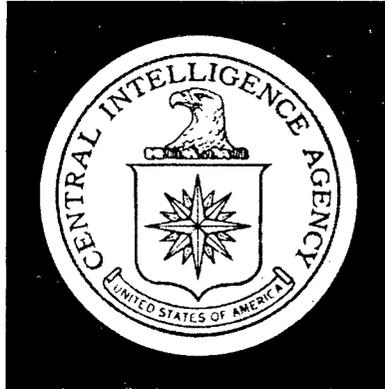
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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam



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5 March 1968

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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

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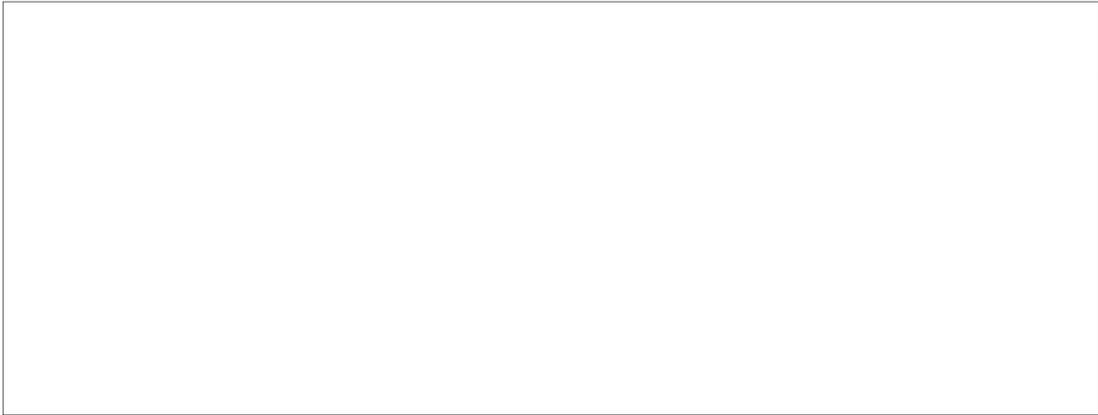
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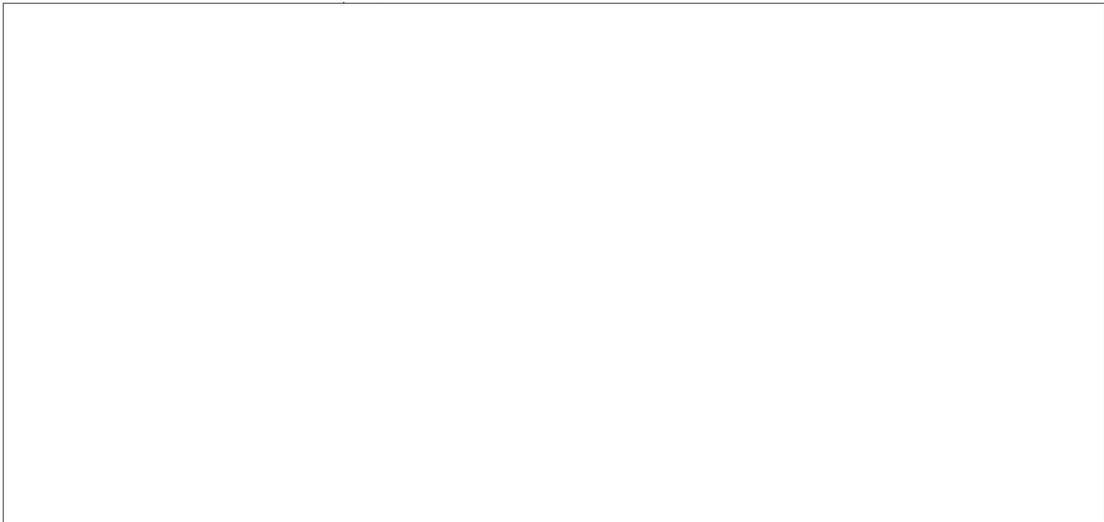
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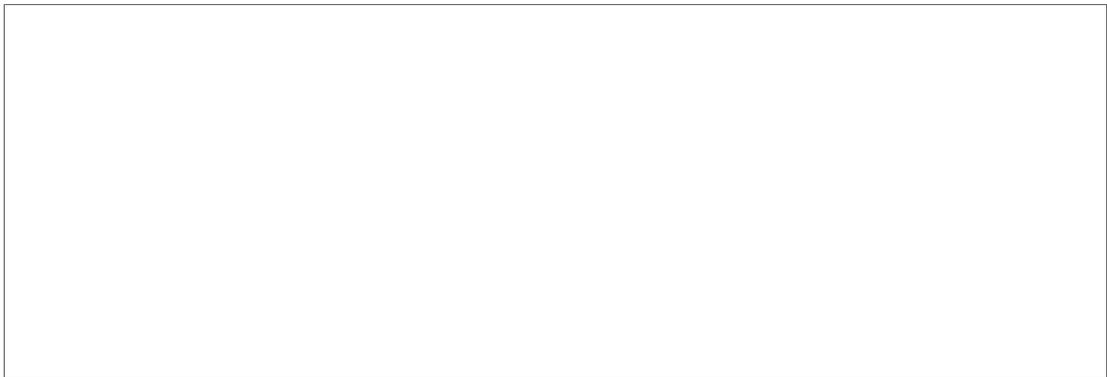
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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Hanoi Assays the US Position: Senator Robert Kennedy's remark about the South Vietnamese Government as a "government with no support" was featured last Friday in another of Hanoi's lectures on why the US cannot win. All this came in the Vietnamese language broadcast of an article by military theoretician Chien Binh.

Binh's thesis essentially was that the Tet campaign put the US on the defensive and the Americans cannot recover no matter how many more troops are brought in. Interwoven through this was a recitation of the theme that the Thieu government was collapsing (here Senator Kennedy was quoted). Aside from the senator, Binh buttressed his arguments with liberal citations from Western press items opposed to the war or pessimistic as to its outcome.

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