

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 1 May 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
1 MAY 1968

1. Vietnam

Thieu still is not sure how much support he can muster for a move to make Tran Van Huong prime minister. He implied as much to Ambassador Bunker yesterday when he said structural and "possibly" personnel changes would be made in the cabinet when the National Assembly passes the mobilization law. Thieu expects this to be done about 10 May. Ky is the leading holdout to Huong's appointment.

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Viet Cong communications continue to indicate preparations for a wide-spread offensive.

2. Korea

North Korean terrorists struck in downtown Seoul last night. A hand grenade was thrown into a building near the capitol wounding several civilians; two unexploded grenades were found elsewhere in the city. The government has increased security measures.

The South Koreans also report a clash with a North Korean patrol south of the Demilitarized Zone early this morning.

3. Cuba

Cuba's foreign exchange position is going to deteriorate this year because sales of sugar to Free World countries are lagging. Production is down and the Cubans are trying to meet their sugar commitments to Communist countries. Right now it is difficult to say just how badly the Cubans will be hurt.

4. Communist World

If the preparatory meeting in Budapest was any indication of things to come, the Soviets must look forward with foreboding to the world Communist conference in November. One delegate said Vietnam was the only common cause at Budapest.

The Czechs and East Germans were at each other's throats, and the Russians barely kept the Czechs from walking out. Only seven of the 14 ruling Communist parties showed up; Moscow found it necessary to list the parties of Martinique, Puerto Rico, and obscure African states in order to reach a respectable count of attendees.

5. Poland

The power struggle goes on. Gomulka seems to have taken round one

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The warring camps center around secret police chief Moczar and provincial party leader Gierk. Their support is not clearly defined but generally comes from younger party men anxious to get power away from Gomulka's old guard.

6. Soviet Union

Soviet space support ships remain in the Indian Ocean. This suggests the Soviets will try another circumlunar mission when a lunar "window" opens again around 19-20 May.

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7. Soviet Union -
Middle East

Moscow is not planning any new UN
initiatives on behalf of the Arabs.

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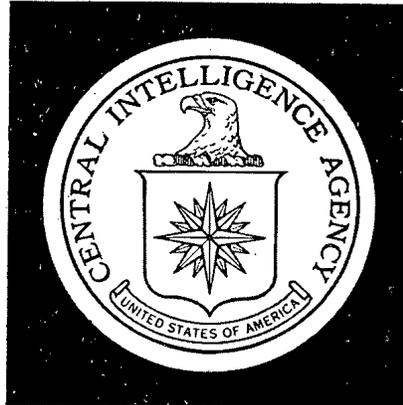
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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam

- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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1 May 1968

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

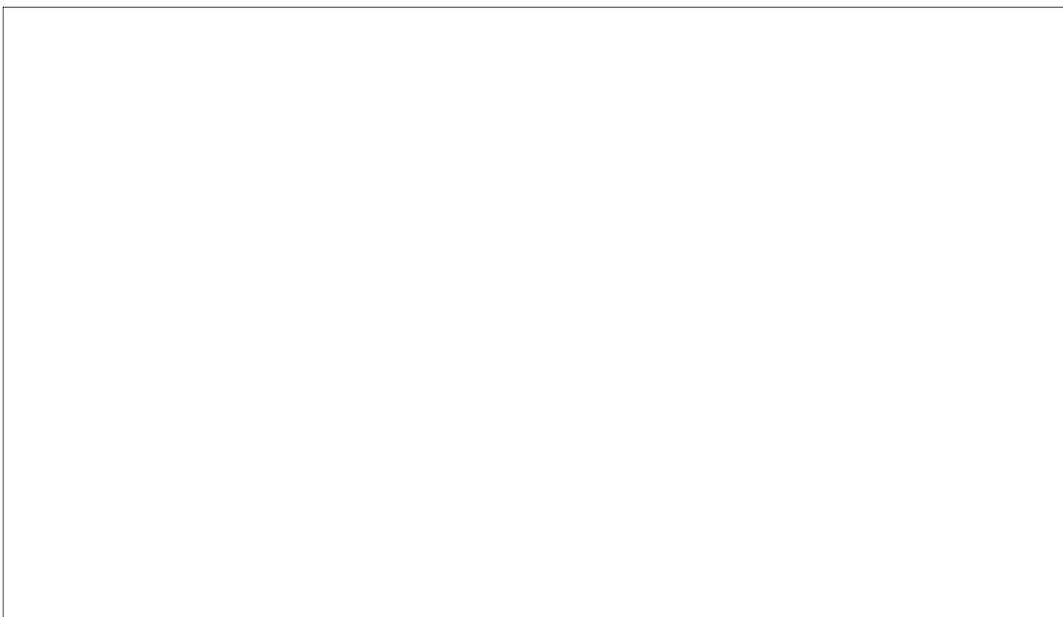
More Hanoi Propaganda on Site: Yesterday's principal propaganda commentary on the problem of a site for talks was a Nhan Dan editorial broadcast in English over Hanoi Radio's International Service. Like all of the commentary of the past two weeks, it insisted that the US pick up the option on either Phnom Penh or Warsaw. It criticized William Bundy's 28 April statement and Secretary Clifford's request for a reasonable interpretation of "anywhere any time." Hanoi has never proposed anything unreasonable--such as the North Pole--said the newspaper. The US has recently used Phnom Penh for high-level consultations with Cambodia, and the US has an embassy and adequate communications in Warsaw. The newspaper concluded that the US attitude was not serious and its actions were dishonest.

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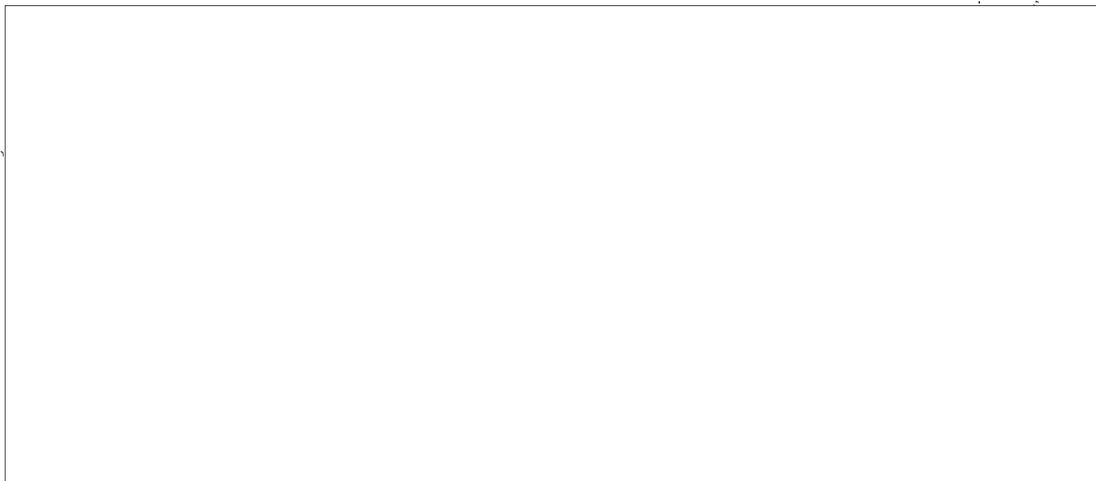


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The Order of Lenin: Moscow is apparently planning to confer the Order of Lenin on the Liberation Front's lady commander, Nguyen Thi Dinh. She is deputy commander of the Liberation Army in South Vietnam and a major publicity prop for the Front at international conferences. Her present command appears to be largely honorary, but she probably was an active guerrilla fighter in the past. She is probably the first Viet Cong to be singled out for such an international award.

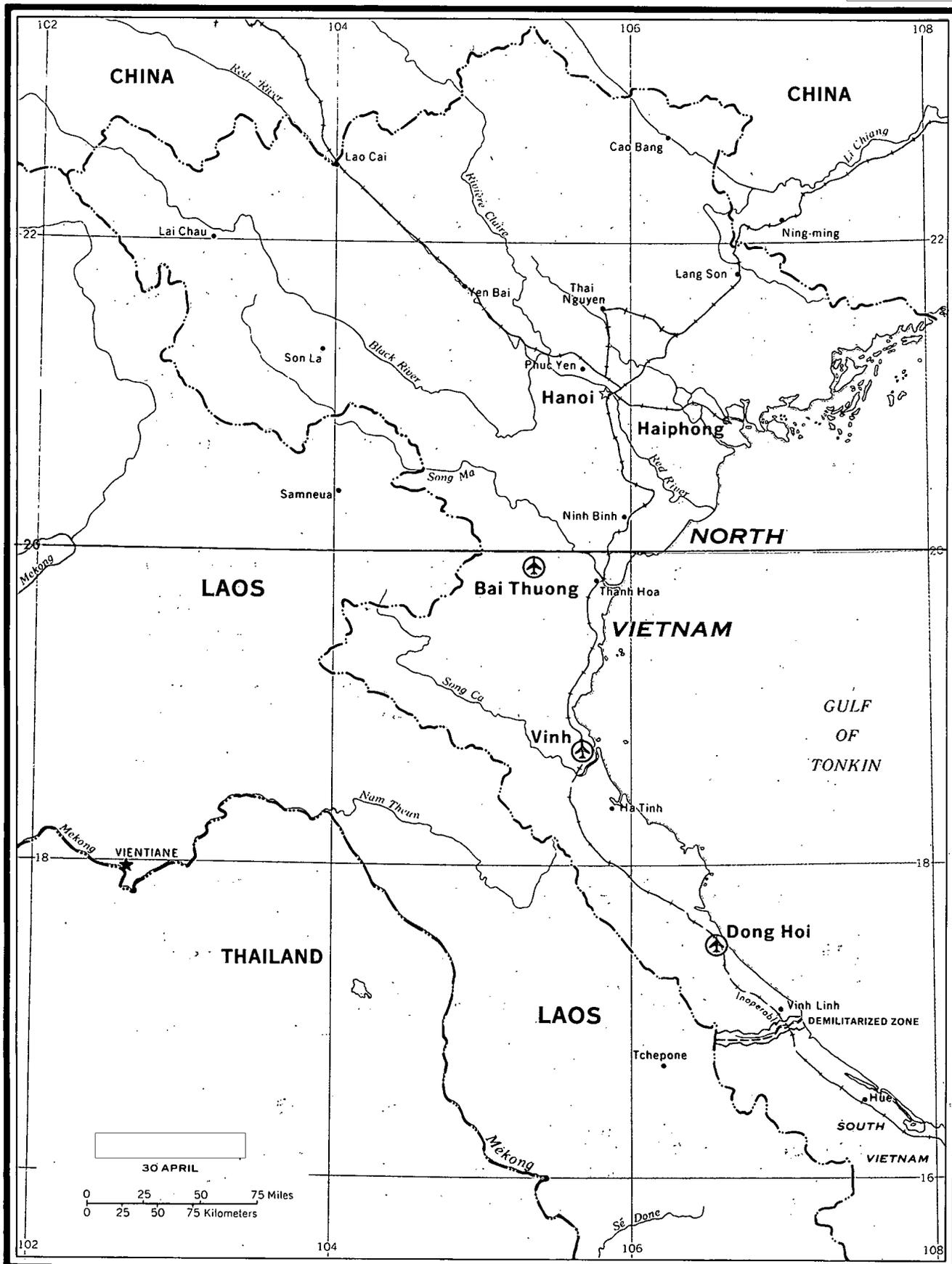
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Resumption of MIG Activity in Southern North Vietnam: Signals intelligence shows that three or four North Vietnamese MIG fighter-interceptors flew to the area of Vinh on 28 April. These southward flights--the first by MIGs to North Vietnam's panhandle region in six weeks--involved one or two MIG-17s and two MIG-21s. The movement coincides with an increase in fighter aircraft training and may signal attempts by North Vietnamese MIGs to engage US aircraft south of the 20th parallel. The MIG-21s were apparently piloted by two of North Vietnam's most proficient and experienced airmen.

The present location and status of these aircraft is unknown. They could still be on the ground in the Vinh area. Recent aerial photographs show that the Vinh airfield, like the nearby one at Bai Thuong, includes an undamaged earthen strip of sufficient length to support MIG aircraft.

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

Attack on President Johnson: The principal Hanoi daily, Nhan Dan, issued a blistering personal attack on President Johnson in its edition of 30 April. It called his administration a "declining regime" and a "falling royal court" which was being deserted en masse by aides in all fields. The commentary was keyed to Ambassador Goldberg's recent resignation but went much further back. Douglas Dillon, John Connor, Robert McNamara, Lawrence O'Brien, and Bill Moyers were specifically named. The paper also made a list of what it called "prominent figures" who had served President Johnson with their "best efforts" only to see their political careers "end pitifully." This group included individuals associated with Vietnam policy--Henry Cabot Lodge, Maxwell Taylor, McNamara, and General Westmoreland.

The newspaper went on to impune the President's motives in his speech of 31 March. While he aspired to be another Lincoln or another Roosevelt, said the journal, his pursuit of militarist policies in Vietnam would give him a place in history only in the company of the "American capitalists." In describing his decision not to seek re-election, the Hanoi press said that undoubtedly it was a very painful decision but that it had failed to take him out of his "isolation at home and abroad."

The broadcast referred briefly to Vice President Humphrey, saying only that he "wants to be a successor to Johnson and a defender of all his policies of the more than four past years."

The diatribe was broadcast over Hanoi Radio's International Service in English and is one of the strongest personal attacks on the US President in many months.

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