



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 22 May 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
22 MAY 1968

1. France

In the face of growing protests throughout the country, De Gaulle is sticking to his guns. He apparently does not plan, at least for now, to replace those cabinet ministers who are being roundly criticized for their handling of student and labor unrest.

Gaullist leaders in the National Assembly are confident that the Pompidou cabinet will survive the censure motion being voted on today or tomorrow.

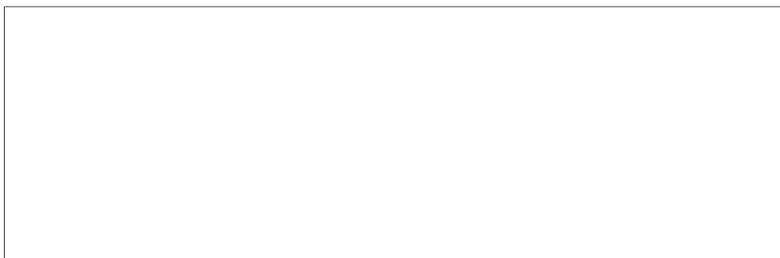
There is speculation that De Gaulle may be thinking of putting his money where his mouth is by calling a popular referendum. He would certainly think twice about this, however, given the demonstrated depth of opposition to his economic and social policies.

[redacted] the government, confronted with the unforeseen events of recent weeks, is punchy and no longer acting as a government. All depends on De Gaulle. He can save the situation, but some believe that he is better at handling the generals' revolt, acting against American hegemony, and preaching nationalism in Bucharest than he is at proposing a new social contract to the nation's workers.

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2. Panama

Some circles in the National Guard are bitter over the probable victory of Arias.

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3. Haiti

The situation is still murky, but it appears that government forces have the insurgents on the run. Port-au-Prince remains calm.

4. Argentina

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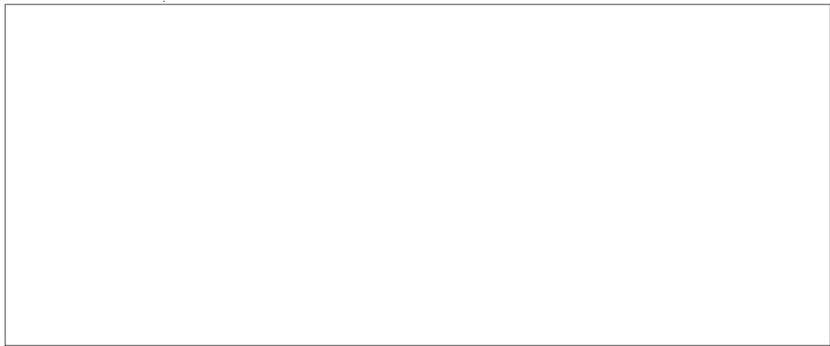
5. South Korea

Tightened security was probably the main purpose behind President Pak's cabinet reshuffle yesterday. The key change was the return of an able army career man to the post of home minister, which controls the police. The communications and transportation ministries, both security related, were given to other able men.

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6. Soviet Union

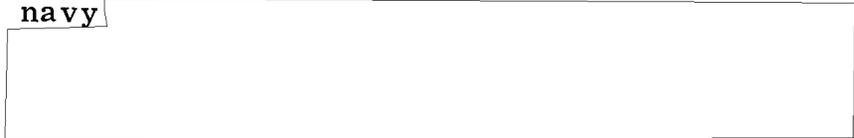
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7. Brazil -
Soviet Union

The Soviets are also chafing over another, and less grim, naval embarrassment--Brazil's retention of their space support ship, the Kegostrov. It is now more than two weeks since it was picked up. A Soviet apology for "inadvertent" violation of Brazil's territorial waters has cut no ice with the navy

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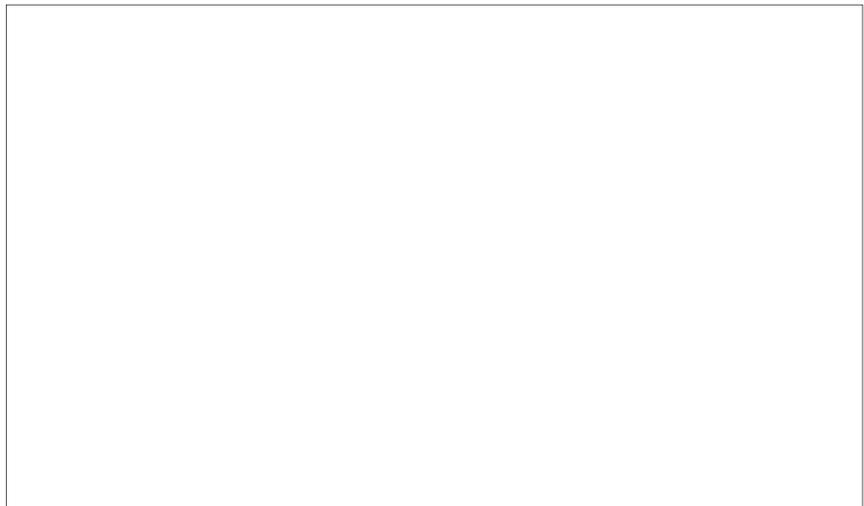


8. Communist China

Peking is arranging abroad for record amounts of chemical fertilizer. This apparently stems from worry over food prospects this year. Communist China's own fertilizer production has been severely disrupted by the Cultural Revolution, and the abnormally good crop year of 1967 is not likely to be repeated.

9. Algeria

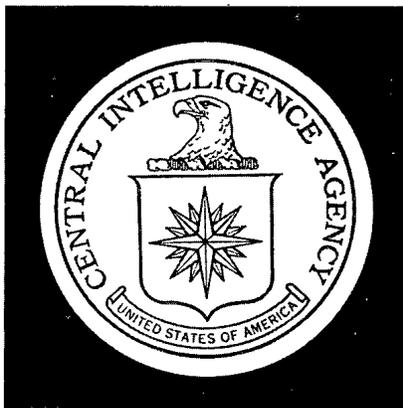
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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam

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



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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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More North Vietnamese Missions to Western Europe: The government in Helsinki has agreed to receive a North Vietnamese representative of ambassadorial rank around the end of this month. This mission is part of a new effort by Hanoi to make its position known in non-Communist countries.

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We also hear that a North Vietnamese trade mission has been visiting the Netherlands and Belgium.



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Hanoi on Chinese Support: As if to underscore that Chinese support for the war is continuing despite Peking's annoyance with the Paris talks, Hanoi broadcast an English language item on 21 May noting that "the 700 million Chinese people" are pledged to provide "powerful backing" to Vietnam. The broadcast attributed these words of praise to Chinese Vice Premier Li Hsien-nien, who reportedly used them when receiving an otherwise obscure North Vietnamese hydraulics survey delegation.

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North Vietnamese Propaganda: In a long but un-noteworthy propaganda commentary on 21 May, the North Vietnamese army daily again argues that US charges of Communist aggression are "absurd" and that the US is trying to "evade" the "pressing problem" of halting the bombings. The paper says that Vietnam is one country and therefore there can be no question of Vietnamese aggression. In other sections, it rejects Ambassador Harriman's suggestion of similarities in the US and North Vietnamese positions, and says that only the US can restore the status of the Demilitarized Zone.

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Hanoi on South Vietnam Shakeup: In a broadcast in Vietnamese to South Vietnam on 20 May, Hanoi radio cited Western reports of President Thieu's recent cabinet reshuffle as evidence of new political instability in Saigon. The broadcast says that Prime Minister Loc's "fall" from power shows that the US has been unable to bring about a stable and effective administration in Saigon. Hanoi usually

is quick to pick up and make use of political problems in South Vietnam, and we are likely to see more of this theme in the coming months.

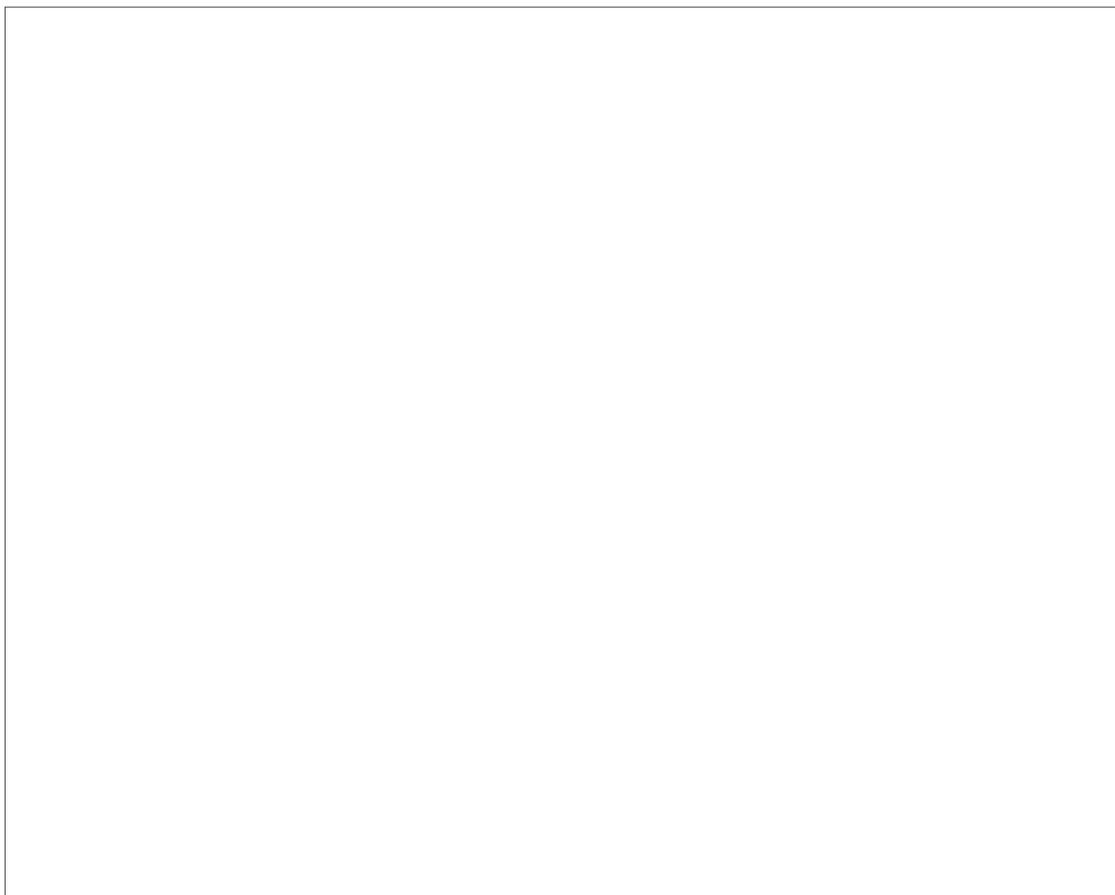
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Communist Political Developments: The Communists continue to publicize their new National Alliance among international audiences, and in South Vietnam they claim to be building up grass roots organizations which will reinforce their plans for a coalition government under the Alliance.

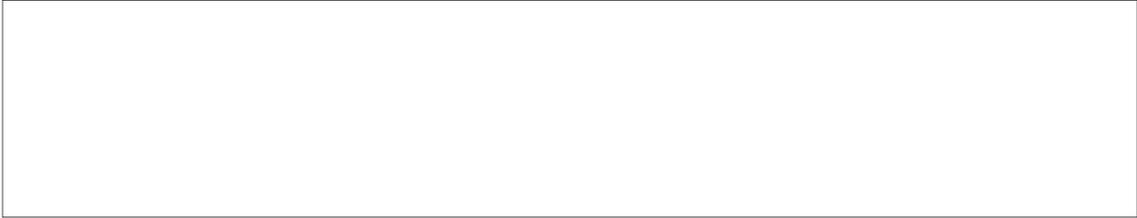


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At a press conference on 17 May, the Front representative in Prague emphasized the appeal the Alliance had among Vietnamese living abroad.



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Back in South Vietnam, the Communists say they are building the kind of local grass roots structure which will strengthen their claims of territorial control, particularly in rural areas. On 18 May, Hanoi announced that "people's liberation committees" had been set up in 170 "newly liberated villages" in four delta provinces. The committees reportedly are taking over self-defense duties and civilian administration.

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

Nothing of significance to report.

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