



*The President's Daily Brief*

~~Top Secret~~ 26 August 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S  
DAILY BRIEF  
26 AUGUST 1968

1. Czechoslovakia -  
Soviet Union

There is little hard information on the talks in Moscow, which have entered their fourth day and continue to be described by the Soviets as "frank and comradely." The reported arrival in Moscow of Ulbricht, Gomulka, Kadar, and Zkivkov suggests that an agreement is nearly ready for them to endorse.

Unconfirmed press reports claim that the major elements of an agreement have been worked out and include the release of all Czechoslovaks under arrest, an enforced limit on the freedom of the press and radio, and the maintenance of some Warsaw Pact forces in Czechoslovakia for an indefinite period.

The situation in Prague and throughout the country remains tense, with the populace becoming gloomier and the occupiers growing edgier. Soviet troops--some new ones were brought in Saturday night--are dealing more roughly with the populace, and there were several incidents of violence yesterday.

Nonetheless, the people of Prague continue to show their nonacceptance of the occupation in unmistakable and sometimes ingenious ways. On Friday night in the main business district there was suddenly a new neon sign reading simply, "Dubcek." Another sign--honored only in the breach--appeals for a ban on miniskirts during the occupation, obviously to deprive the Soviet troops of one of the glories of Prague.

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2. Yugoslavia-Rumania

Relations between Eastern Europe's independent-minded and orthodox Communist regimes have been severely damaged by the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Tito told Ambassador Elbrick on 23 August that Yugoslav-Soviet relations from now on would be devoid of the trust and confidence that had been slowly building up.

Rumanian leader Ceausescu has for the first time been attacked by name by the Soviet and Hungarian press. Mostly low-level Soviet bloc types showed up for Rumanian National Day celebrations at various diplomatic posts last Friday.

Tito and Ceausescu met Saturday at a Yugoslav border town, presumably to coordinate contingency plans concerning the Czech crisis. They will probably not risk provoking the Soviets by overdramatizing their position. Rumanian Premier Maurer does not see any "immediate" danger of Soviet armed intervention. There is, in fact, still no hard evidence that the Soviets intend to carry their intervention in Eastern Europe beyond Czechoslovakia.

3. South Vietnam

The Communists appear to be in the initial phase of their long-expected "third general offensive." Over the weekend, there were widespread ground assaults and shellings throughout much of South Vietnam. The tactical emphasis continued to be on secondary allied targets, suggesting that the main event is yet to come--an all-out thrust against Saigon, Ban Me Thuot, Da Nang, the Tam Ky-Chu Lai area, and Hue.

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4. Soviet Union

An SS-9 ICBM launched from Tyuratam last Friday may have had four separate re-entry vehicles.

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We expect to have more data on this event in a few days.

5. France

The French detonated their first thermonuclear device on 24 August at the Pacific test site and probably are now capable of developing thermonuclear warheads for their ballistic missile systems. The device had a yield of about 2.3 megatons.

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[redacted] a second thermonuclear explosion may be planned for mid-to-late September. The tests are extremely expensive, however, and another may not be necessary in view of the success the French have already had.

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This test series, begun on 7 July, has included the explosion of three nuclear devices ranging in yield from 150 to 530 kilotons. These were probably the prototype submarine-launched ballistic missile warhead.

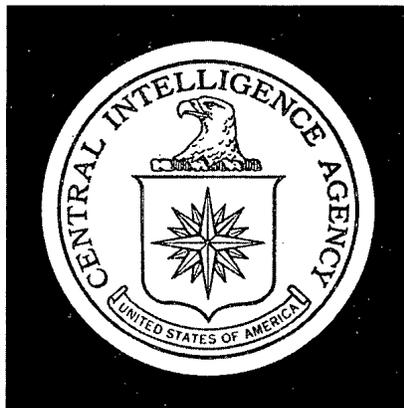
6. Australia

In the Cabinet's forthcoming review of Australian defense policy, Defense Minister Fairhall will come down hard against Gorton's "fortress Australia" concept. Fairhall wants to keep at least air and naval units in the Malaysian and Singapore areas as long as there is trouble on the Asian mainland. Embassy Canberra believes that the Cabinet still works largely by consensus, and that Gorton's defense views may yet be brought closer to US interests.

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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

French Diplomat in Mongolia Talks to North Vietnamese: The French ambassador to Mongolia, Georges Perruche, talked with a US official in Paris on 23 August. He said he had recently asked the North Vietnamese ambassador in Ulan Bator and his deputy chief of mission flatly if the North Vietnamese were serious in their negotiations in Paris and wanted the talks to make progress. He was assured that they did. He claims that he then defended the reasonableness of the US position and urged the Vietnamese to meet the obviously reasonable requirement for reciprocity.

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about the possibility of a dangerous flood. [Redacted]

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

There is nothing of significance to report today.

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