

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 31 August 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
31 AUGUST 1968

1. Rumania
(As of 5:00 AM
EDT)

[redacted] the movement of some Soviet forces toward the Rumanian border. It is too early to say whether this is meant as a pressure tactic or in fact indicates an intent to move into the country.

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2. Czechoslovakia

The Soviets appear on the verge of making new arrests. Pravda today called for the liquidation of 40,000 "counter-revolutionaries" in Czechoslovakia, warning that the struggle is far from over. This follows reports that Prime Minister Cernik advised the nation's intellectuals yesterday to "get out while they can," as he could guarantee the safety of no one, including himself.

Soviet security forces continue their takeover of key posts in important ministries.

The Czech Government has established an office to control press, radio and television media while formal legislation on information control is being drawn up. The press is already exercising restraint.

3. Soviet Union -
Czechoslovakia

[redacted]

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As yet we have noted no cracks in the public show of unity among the Soviet leaders. Neither is there any sign of lessening resolve to bring the Czechs to heel. Political infighting may well occur, however, if Soviet aims are not quickly and cleanly achieved.

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4. Warsaw Pact -
NATO

The Soviet ground force buildup resulting from intervention in Czechoslovakia has not weakened the over-all strength of Warsaw Pact ground forces facing NATO. [redacted]

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[redacted]

By contrast, the Warsaw Pact's offensive air capabilities have been reduced. The Czech Air Force of some 600 aircraft, now probably eliminated from Pact planning, has been the most effective of the East European air arms.

5. South Vietnam

[redacted] captured prisoners, and [redacted] increasingly refer to 2 September as the date for launching attacks. The present Communist deployment suggests that they hope to hit allied bases and urban centers throughout the country.

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The major target still appears to be Saigon, although almost every provincial capital and major urban center in the country could be hit with artillery fire and with at least small unit ground attacks.

The Communists' timetable, however, may be upset in some areas of the country by allied pre-emptive attacks.

6. Dominican Republic

[redacted] Communist terrorists are planning attacks on US personnel. These extremists have been told to observe the habits and homes of Americans (also of local police and military officers) in preparation for shootings and bombings.

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Earlier plans did not come to much, but the Communists are capable of assassination attempts and other violence.

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7. Guatemala

The intensive search for Ambassador Mein's killers continues. There have been threats by the Communist terrorists against other foreign diplomats.

8. Mexico

Sunday--when Diaz Ordaz gives his state of the union address--may be a day of disorder. Students are planning demonstrations. They are also preparing to "defend" the university campus with arms and molotov cocktails. The government, however, seems determined to deal firmly with the protesters.

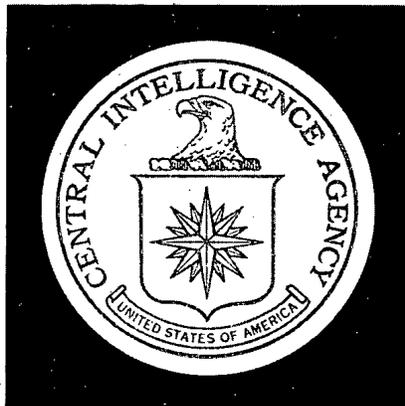
One small bomb exploded at Ambassador Freeman's residence yesterday, with no damage.

9. Arab States

Recent satellite photography shows that the Arabs are continuing to improve their air defense capabilities. In Egypt, two new surface-to-air missile sites near Cairo have been seen, and new runways are being built at two fighter bases. Egypt, Iraq, and Syria are building more protective shelters for their aircraft.

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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

31 August 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

"Liberation Committees" Established: On 28 August Liberation Radio proclaimed the establishment of a "temporary people's liberation committee" in Ca Mau Province--the Communist equivalent of the government's An Xuyen Province. The committee was set up at a five-day meeting in mid-August. Although this committee is made to appear a genuine creation of the Ca Mau "people," the broadcast gives the first open admission of Communist direction and participation in such activities. The five-day meeting included "all representatives from the National Liberation Front provincial committee," along with representatives from already established district and village administrations and from "mass organizations" in the province.

Except for the bogus Thua-Thien-Hue "revolutionary administration," which was a paper government set up by the National Alliance shortly after Tet and almost unheard of since that time, the new Ca Mau liberation committee is the first pretense of a government presence above the district level. Its creation may set the pattern for the establishment of additional province administrations throughout the country, with the Communists first claiming extensive programs at the hamlet and village levels before capping it with a provincial organization.

The claims for Ca Mau were followed up on 29 August by a Hanoi broadcast which claimed that similar local "self-governing regimes" were gradually being set up on a country-wide basis. The broadcast made it clear that these organizations were all democratically elected, anti-US, and anti-Saigon, and were carrying out the Liberation Front's political program.

It is possible that at some time in the near future these "revolutionary administrations" might be used to form a national administration. The Communists' hopes for a national administration have always

foundered on an inability to produce any personalities of national stature, and they may be trying to get around this difficulty by emphasizing their political control over large parts of the countryside. The new rural governments are clearly intended to give the impression to both domestic and foreign audiences that Communist political control is widespread and democratically based.

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Liberation Front on "Uprisings": Liberation Radio on 27 August broadcast a commentary which claimed that "uprisings" have been occurring throughout South Vietnam since 18 August. Tay Ninh, "all the provinces"

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in the delta and around Saigon, and towns and provinces throughout I Corps were cited as areas in which the people had risen up against the "puppet administration."

Some passages of the commentary suggest that notwithstanding their bravado, the Communists are dissatisfied with the political side of their current operations-- or in Viet Cong jargon, with the "uprising" aspect of the "general offensive and uprising" campaign. Several references are made to the Saigon government's efforts to "cover up the facts" and "impair the influence of the uprisings." The commentary then warned, "The enemy can by no means gauge the strength of our compatriots' uprising movement in the days ahead." This could be an effort by Hanoi to prod its party officials in the South to show more results in the political field.

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Logistics: US pilots reported a high level of waterborne logistics craft activity in southern North Vietnam during the week of 19-25 August, continuing a trend which has been noted since late July.

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

North Vietnamese on the Candidates: In an interview with a Japanese journalist on 16 August transmitted by Hanoi's news agency, Paris negotiator Xuan Thuy prefaced comments on the US campaign by saying he did not wish to "interfere" in US domestic affairs, but could not remain silent on the Vietnam policies being espoused by "various circles." While characterizing the Johnson-Humphrey approach to the conflict as "completely" discredited, Thuy appeared--by the greater length of his criticism--to find Nixon's position even less palatable.

According to a wire service report, however, Vice President Humphrey was severely handled in an English language broadcast by a Radio Hanoi broadcast beamed at US servicemen in Vietnam. Commenting on his nomination, the broadcast reportedly described Humphrey as a greedy opportunist unconcerned with the war's cost in human lives so long as he gets "the big money the presidency would give him."

Hanoi on Demonstrations: The antiwar demonstrations in Chicago continue to provide Radio Hanoi with abundant propaganda material. In broadcasts on 28 and 30 August, its international service in English described in particular detail the activities of one group of demonstrators who allegedly carried flags of the Liberation Front and chanted "Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh!" The broadcasts attempted to show widespread opposition to the war within the Democratic Party and from many sectors of US society, citing the "demands" of lawyers, businessmen, women, and war veterans that the US end its involvement in Vietnam.

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