



The President's Daily Brief

3 April 1969

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I, MAJOR PROBLEMS

SOVIET AFFAIRS

An uneasy calm prevails in Czechoslovakia. Many people gathered in the downtown area of Prague last night, but there was no evidence of public protest over the regime crackdown on "antisocialist" criticism. Rumors were plentiful as hard information was difficult to come by; there has been no confirmation of press reports that Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Semyenov handed the Czechs a note threatening that Soviet forces would restore order if the Czechs did not.

Party boss Dubcek made a radio-television address today. First reporting indicates it to be a "more in sorrow than in anger" speech warning the people that further outbursts will take the country back to last August. Additional information on the speech will be provided in the Late Notes tomorrow morning.

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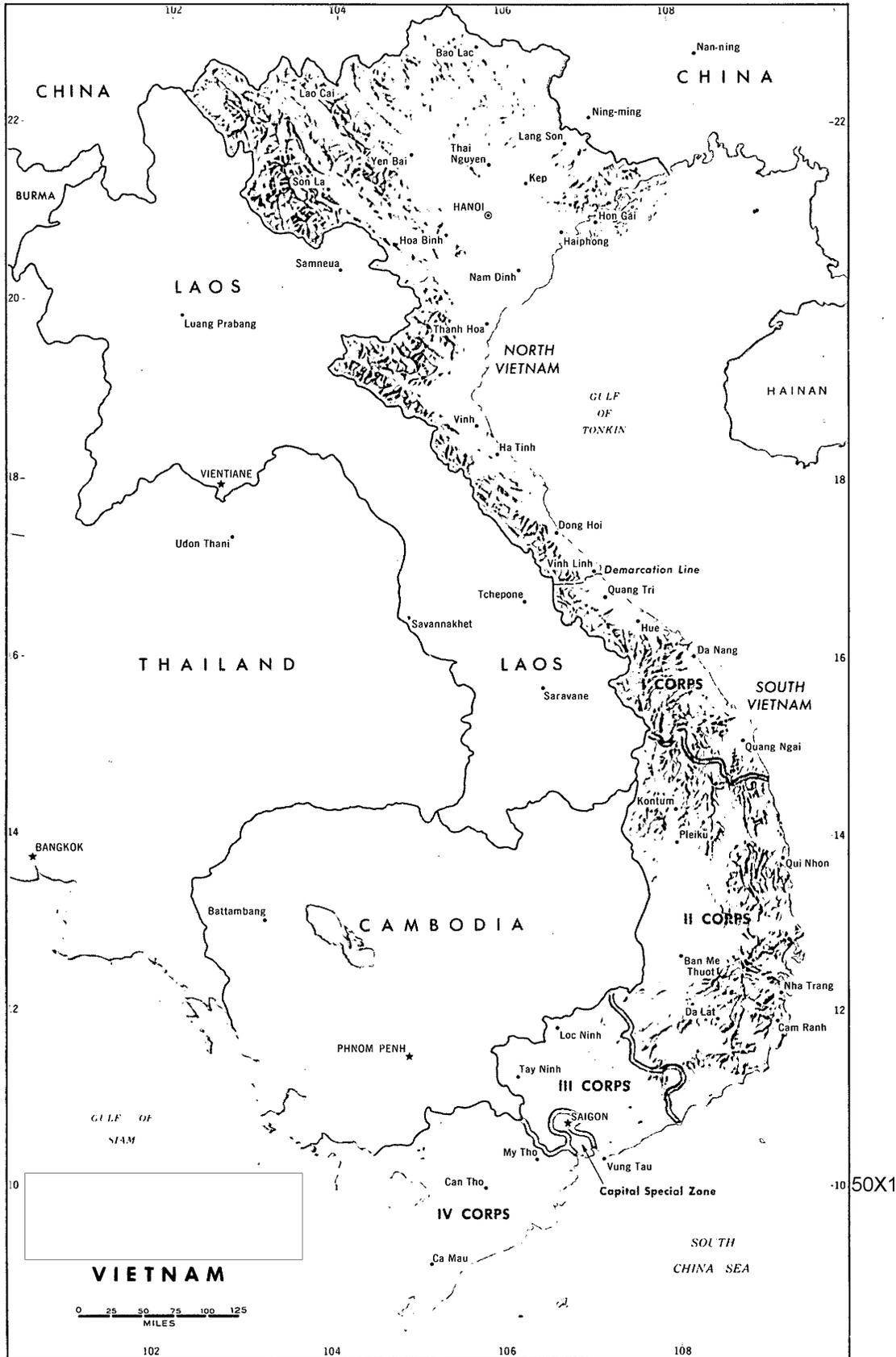
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Continuing search of satellite photography for Soviet ICBM deployment shows that construction has been started on three more SS-11 groups of ten silos each during the last six months. All known SS-11 groups now under construction should be completed by mid-1970. At that time there will be 780 operational SS-11 launchers.

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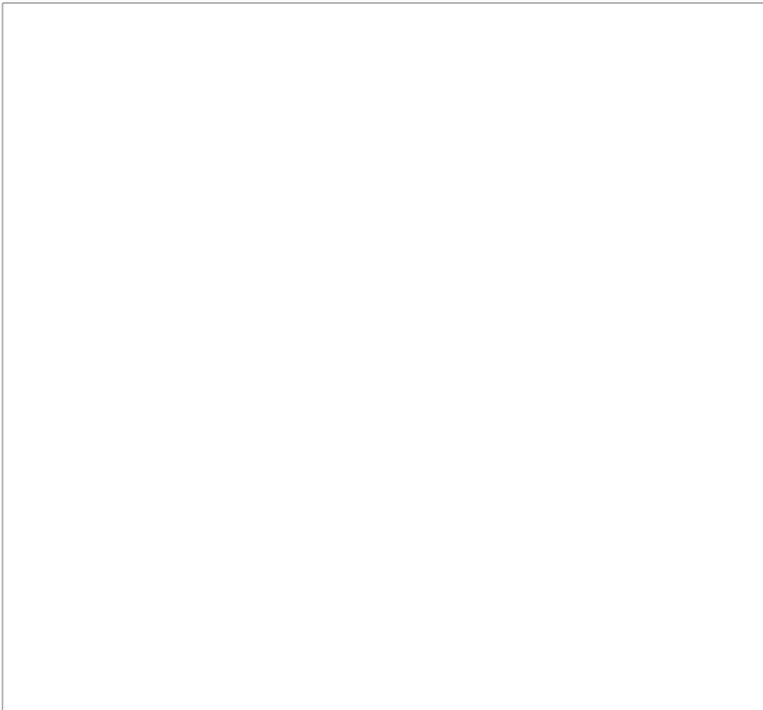


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4 April 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
3 APRIL 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

SOVIET AFFAIRS

Dubcek made it clear in his speech yesterday that Soviet pressures had become so strong that he has no choice but to introduce certain restrictive domestic policies and to tighten controls over the population. He hinted that the Russians had lost their patience, and might now be ready to take other steps to speed the process of "normalization." In effect, Dubcek was telling his listeners that another anti-Soviet outburst would spell the end of his leadership, the end of the reform program, and the return of Soviet tanks and troops to the cities.

Dubcek remains in an extremely difficult position. He can no longer drag his feet in responding to Moscow's demands-- "we must combine persuasion with decisive measures"--and has tried in his speech to convince the people to accept new domestic restrictions without reservations. At the same time he must try to mollify progressive groups which are becoming increasingly alienated from the party leadership.

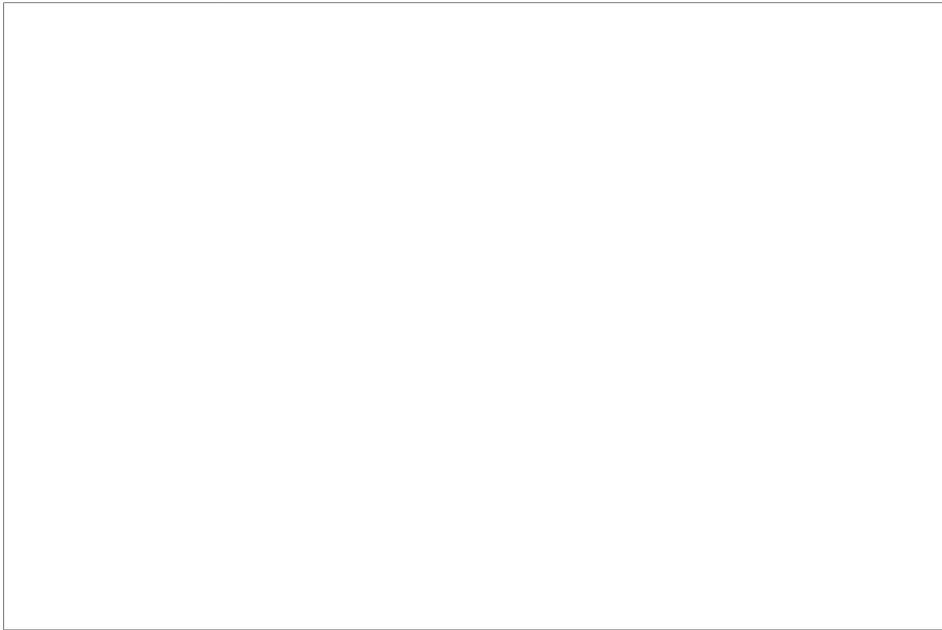
the trade unions are already planning a general strike to protest general price hikes expected to be announced next week. The regime considers this measure an essential step in its economic reform program. Such a strike, which probably would also be joined by the students, could generate more public manifestations of anti-Russian sentiment, and lead to the fall of the Dubcek regime. (Various FBIS, Central Intelligence Bulletin, 4 Apr)

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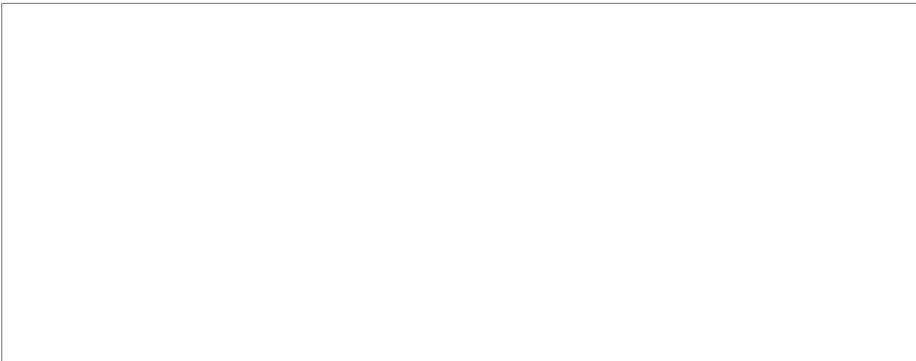
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There is nothing significant to report on other areas.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

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EUROPE

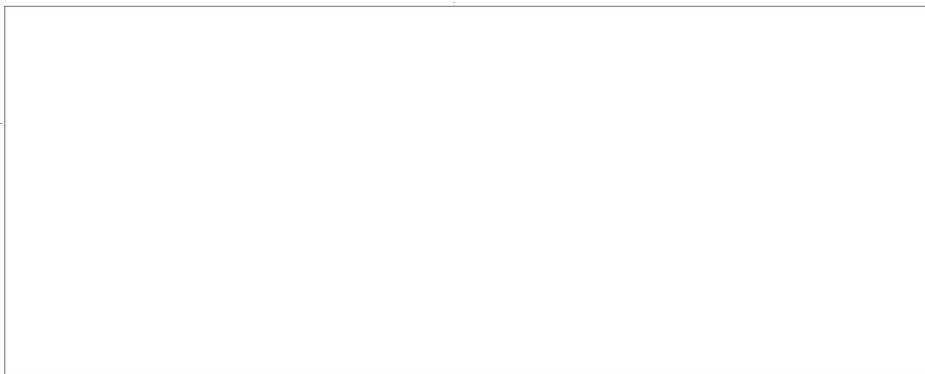
While Prime Minister Wilson is having his troubles, we believe that press reports of a serious challenge to his leadership of the Labor Party are exaggerated. The results of his trip to Nigeria are less than impressive, but he had forewarned the public not to expect anything spectacular, insisting that he was going as a fact-finder, not a mediator. Wilson was unsuccessful, however, in persuading the Federal Nigerian Government to curtail the bombing of Biafra--a task which, if successful, might have quieted domestic critics of London's support of Lagos.

It is true that the latest public opinion polls show only two persons in ten satisfied with the Wilson administration, and Labor candidates have suffered sharp defeats in recent by-elections.



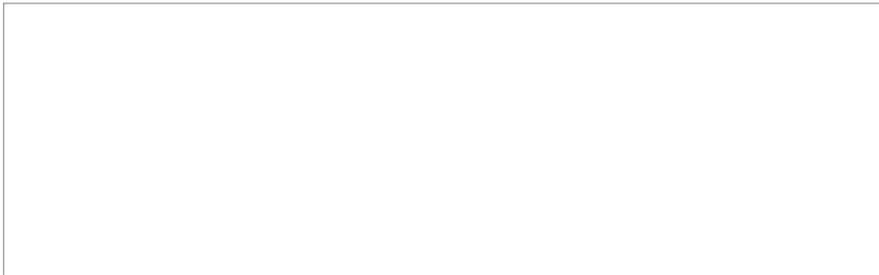
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VIETNAM



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General Quang, who is President Thieu's intelligence coordinator, has informed an American observer in Saigon that several division commanders will be replaced shortly. Although Quang claimed the planned changes were routine rotations in career assignments, he singled out the commander of the 18th Division--probably the worst unit in the South Vietnamese Army--as the leading candidate for replacement. General Quang was reporting on problems considered by the President's Advisory Council on 31 March, and it appears that he wished to make clear to US officials that the Saigon leadership is concerned about the quality of some of its division commanders and plans to take action.

MIDDLE EAST

There is nothing significant to report.

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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

PERU

Embassy Lima believes that hard-line nationalists and leftists are consolidating their position in the Peruvian Government. We concur in this assessment

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[Redacted]

We see almost no chance of any significant change in the government or its policies before the Hickenlooper and Sugar Act deadlines, and we suspect Velasco will prove to have a good deal of staying power even afterwards.

The government has given no sign that it is losing its nerve in the dispute with the US; an editor who is close to Velasco reiterated only yesterday that the "palace group" is sure that the US will not impose sanctions. He alleged that contingency plans are ready if sanctions do come, however.

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COMMUNIST CHINA

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SOUTH KOREA



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