



The President's Daily Brief

15 August 1969

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VIETNAM

Heavy ground fighting flared up again on 13-14 August in northwestern III Corps and near Da Nang. Five battalion-sized engagements, all centered around US bases, were reported in Binh Long Province. In neighboring Tay Ninh Province, another battalion-sized Viet Cong unit attacked an ARVN base camp five miles southwest of the provincial capital.

South of Da Nang, US Marines are maintaining contact with elements of a North Vietnamese regiment which has lost over 200 men since the latest "high point" of 11-12 August. Attacks are also continuing against government refugee camps; three northeast of Quang Ngai city were attacked on 13 August.

Tactical intelligence continues to indicate that a new "high point" will occur around 19 August. It also suggests that the Communists intend to sustain their new offensive in widely separated parts of the country well into September.

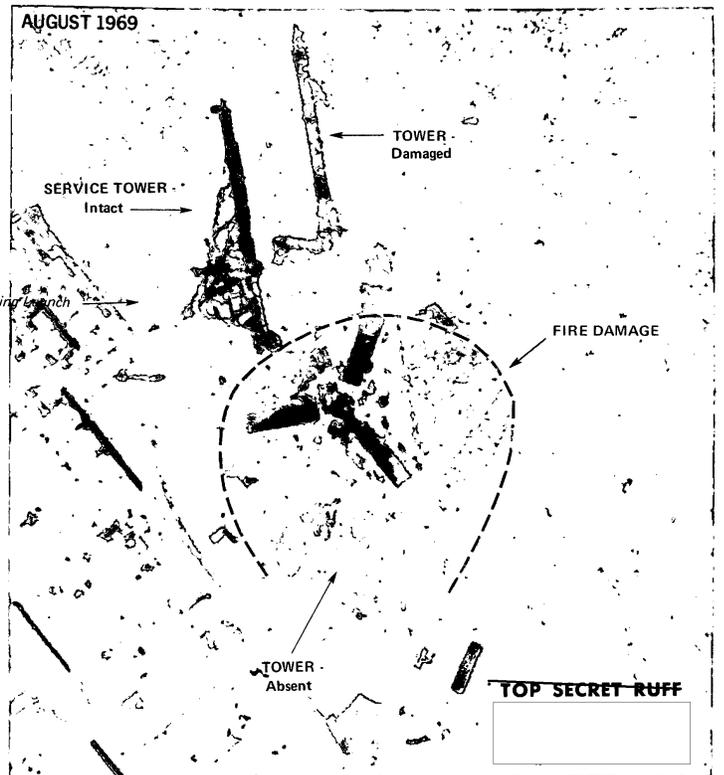
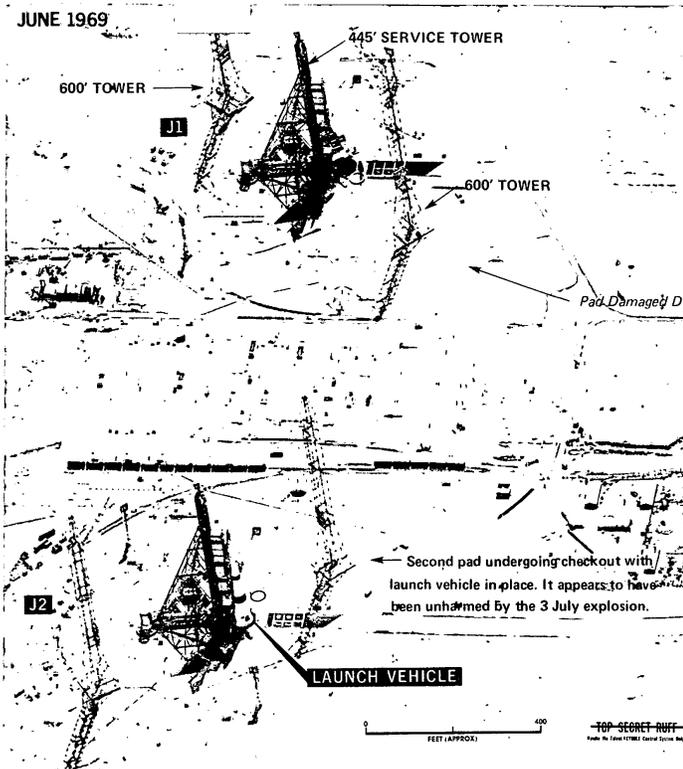
SOVIET AFFAIRS

With the approach of the anniversary of the Soviet invasion, Czechoslovak authorities have reinforced the regular police and activated the "people's militia"--the Communist party's security units which are usually mobilized in times of potential crisis. Security officials are making preventive arrests of known criminals and dissidents whom they consider likely to generate trouble.

Party leaders have begun making daily appeals to the people to refrain even from quiet, non-violent demonstrations.

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Largest Soviet Booster Explodes at Complex J



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The regime is probably being helped in this effort by unconfirmed rumors that Warsaw Pact exercises are to take place around major cities during the anniversary period, primarily for purposes of population control.

Trouble, if it comes, would most likely be from the more extreme of the country's disaffected youth, some of whom are said to have recently stolen small quantities of arms. Conservatives in the regime might attempt to fan any disturbances, hoping to precipitate the intervention of Soviet forces and the downfall of Husak and his moderate colleagues.

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In addition to correcting the problems with the booster, the Soviets probably will need six months to a year to repair the launch pad. The second pad nearby appears undamaged.

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Zond 7 was recovered in the USSR yesterday after its eight-day circumlunar flight. Zond 7 seems to have been a

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full-scale rehearsal for a manned circumlunar flight, which would come as early as next month. A Soviet manned lunar landing mission may be two or three years away because it would need a larger booster which has not yet been successfully tested.

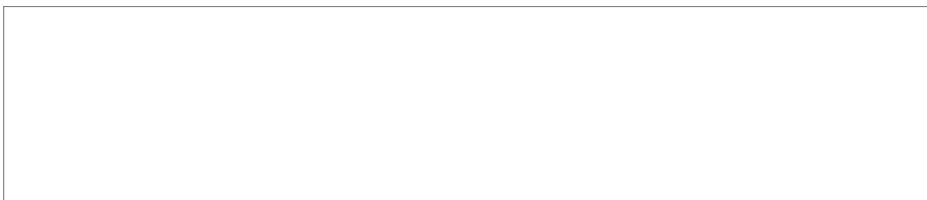
INDIA

Mrs. Gandhi yesterday moved closer to a showdown with the Congress Party bosses by refusing to associate herself with a call to party members to vote for Sanjiva Reddy, the official Congress candidate for president. Her allies, meanwhile, are lobbying frantically for V. V. Giri, whom she backed for the party nomination last month.

Some senior party leaders are trying to cool tempers on both sides. They have working for them the traditional reluctance of all party leaders (Mrs. Gandhi included) to do anything which risked the end of Congress rule. Moreover, we suspect Mrs. Gandhi is reluctant to jeopardize the gains she made in last month's test of strength with the bosses by mounting an all-out campaign against Reddy. The animosities are deep, however, and the conciliators have their work cut out for them.

NORTHERN IRELAND

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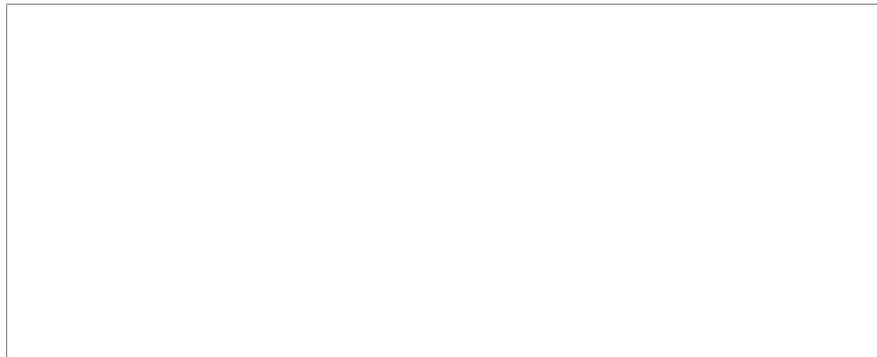
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