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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

# *Central Intelligence Bulletin*



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16 February 1968

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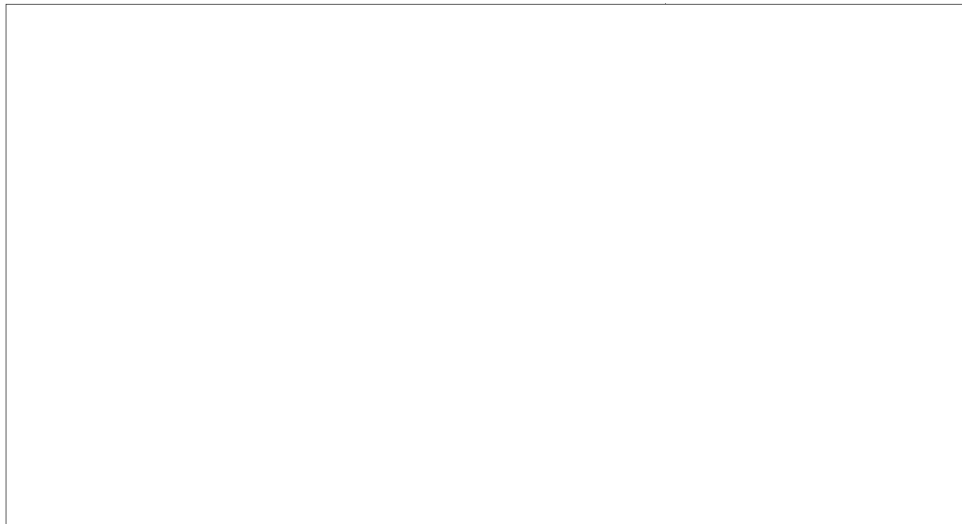
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\*Vietnam:

South Vietnam: The Communists are continuing to improve their logistic capabilities in the Khe Sanh area.

[redacted] the Communists have succeeded in reopening Laotian Route 9 to the Quang Tri Province border. There is evidence of medium to heavy use of this route as far eastward as the abandoned Laotian Army outpost at Ban Houei Sane, just southwest of the Communist-occupied Lang Vei Special Forces camp. The road will facilitate the resupply and reinforcement of North Vietnamese forces currently deployed in the Khe Sanh battle sector.

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Meanwhile, major elements of the North Vietnamese Army's 324 "B" Division continued their encroachment upon the Quang Tri city area, suggesting that another round of attacks may be forthcoming in this sector.

No significant new enemy initiatives were reported in the II, III, or IV corps areas on 15 February, although fighting continued in Hue and several heavy clashes occurred between allied sweep forces and Viet Cong units on the outskirts of Saigon. There were indications in both collateral and communications intelligence that the Viet Cong 9th Division may be moving troops and supplies toward Saigon.

Vice President Ky may be preparing to undermine the joint emergency task force by seeking dissolution of the South Vietnamese side of it or by resigning as its chairman. [redacted]

[redacted] Ky is piqued by allegations from President Thieu's supporters that he is using his

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task force role to usurp power.

Ky is evidently convinced that government performance will bog down if the recovery effort reverts to the direction of President Thieu and Prime Minister Loc, and apparently hopes that this will force Thieu to delegate broader authority on a permanent basis.

North Vietnam: An authoritative North Vietnamese military commentary portrays the Tet offensive as just one step--albeit an extraordinary one--on a long, hard road to final Communist victory. The article, which appeared in Hanoi's army daily on 11 February, praises the successes achieved by the Communists, but stresses the necessity of "progressive" development of the war. It argues that the prolonged and lasting consequences of the Tet offensive will be "much more serious" than the immediate impact of the military attacks.

The article seems to be a reaffirmation of the Vietnamese Communists' basic strategy of a protracted struggle, a theme downgraded but not submerged during the past few months.

On the diplomatic front, Hanoi is stepping up the pressure for a bombing halt and for moving the war into a "fight-talk" stage.

After earlier efforts to publicize its more forthcoming position on talks with the US, the North Vietnamese have made a series of follow-up diplomatic moves. During the first week of the Tet offensive, they apparently made a concerted effort to contact non-Communist governments in order to present their case and to underscore their readiness to talk if the US stops the bombing. [redacted]

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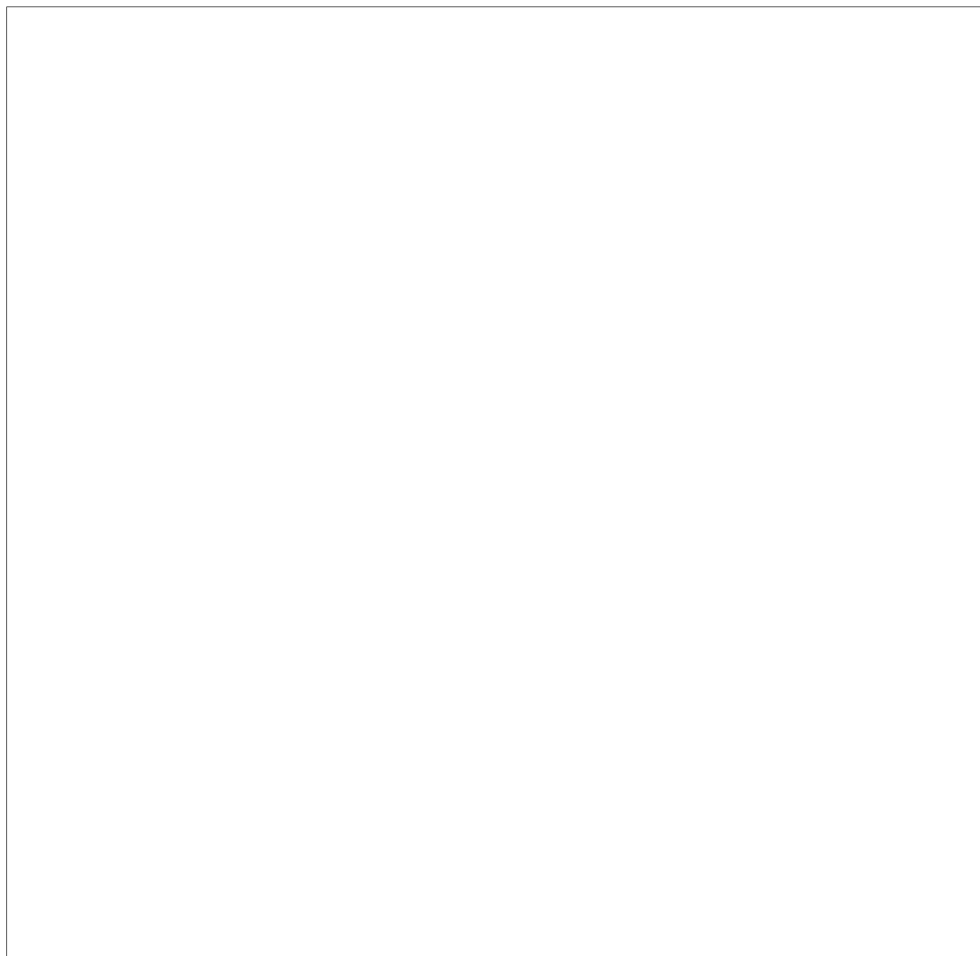
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USSR-Berlin: Soviet letters of 14 February to the Big Three were designed primarily to create friction among the Western Allies.

The letters to the US and UK contained much the same complaints that Moscow made [REDACTED] to Bonn last month, alleging that Bonn was trying to lay claim to West Berlin. The two powers were asked to protect the special status of the city from West German "pretensions." The letter to the French, however, consisted of a single sentence noting Franco-Soviet interest in European detente and stating merely that the US and UK had been sent letters about dangerous West German activities in Berlin.

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In addition to encouraging differences among the Big Three on how to deal with Bonn on such matters, Moscow probably is trying to foment friction between the Allies and Bonn. The Soviets may expect the Allies to caution Bonn against obvious demonstrations of its links with Berlin in order to avoid provoking a stronger Communist response.

A few days before the letters were sent, Soviet Ambassador Abrasimov in East Berlin asked to see the US ambassador before the end of the month. He also sought a meeting with the French ambassador. Abrasimov probably hopes to get Bonn to play down the Bundestag committee meetings which it has scheduled in Berlin early next month and which are sure to raise hackles in East Germany. [REDACTED]

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Brazil: Discontented military officers hope to force radical changes in the Costa e Silva administration this month.



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Much of the army's uneasiness stems from its belief that its image has been tarnished through corruption, inefficiency, and policy failures by the present regime. Many military men, particularly field-grade officers, believe that even though their plan to force action is risky, such a move is preferable to admitting that the army has failed to govern well. Further, they fear that inaction would risk letting power fall into the hands of corrupt politicians.

These restive groups are not likely to have developed a full consensus or a firm course of action. In their entirety the demands they have made are undoubtedly too strong for Costa e Silva to accept. These groups probably do not have enough support to present an ultimatum. Costa e Silva probably will have to make some political adjustments, but he should be able to work out at least a short-term accommodation that will not jeopardize his personal position. [ ]

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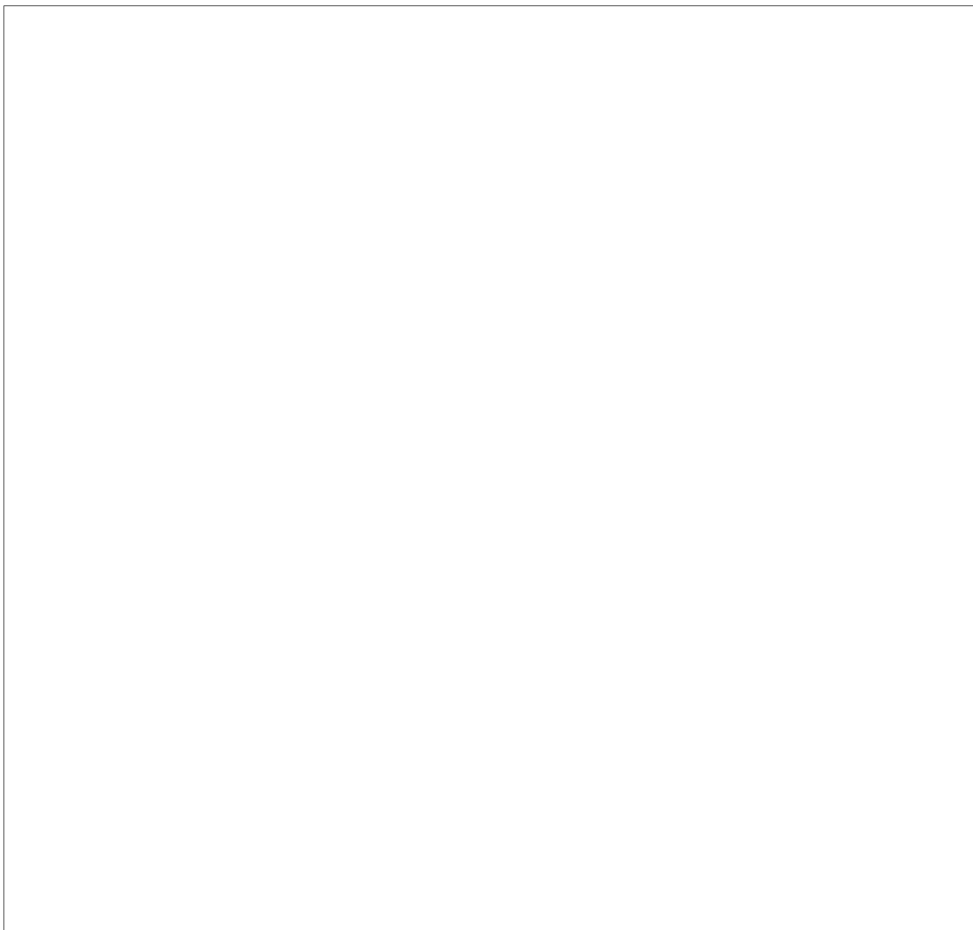
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NOTE

Belgium: King Baudouin has appointed a former prime minister, Paul Segers, to appraise the situation and help resolve the government crisis. Segers will poll political leaders and recommend either further efforts to form a cabinet or dissolution of parliament and new elections. If elections are held in the present highly charged atmosphere, extremists on both sides of the linguistic issue are likely to profit, thereby deepening the rift between the two communities.

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