

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 19 July 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
19 JULY 1968

LATE ITEM

Czechoslovakia -
Soviet Union

Podgorny this morning added his voice to the Soviet chorus which has been warning about the "threat to socialism" in Czechoslovakia. Referring to the "notorious events in Czechoslovakia," he reiterated earlier Soviet declarations that the parties which met in Warsaw "will never put up with a split in the historical gains of socialism."

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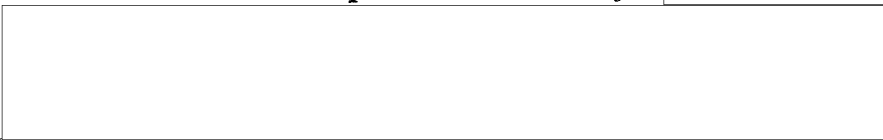
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1. Czechoslovakia -
Soviet Union

Prague is sticking to its guns. The Czechs, in Dubcek's TV address yesterday and in a statement earlier in the day from the party presidium, made it clear in calm, measured tones that they do not plan to yield on any of the important points at issue. This stand presumably will get the endorsement of the party's central committee at its meeting today. The regime has already received a flood of protestations of support from around the country.

Tito, Rumanian party chief Ceausescu, and representatives of the French and Italian Communist parties will be arriving in Prague today, according to the Czech press agency.

Moscow has not yet had time to react to the latest statements from Prague, and we do not expect a considered reply until after the Czech central committee makes known its position today.



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Meanwhile, Soviet media are keeping up the flow of critical propaganda.

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There still has been no substantial change in the Soviet military posture in and around Czechoslovakia.

2. Chile

Frei has asked his congress for permission to visit Brazil in early September. According to press reports, Chilean diplomats in Washington are speculating that he may want to visit the US on the same trip. We have no other word on this.

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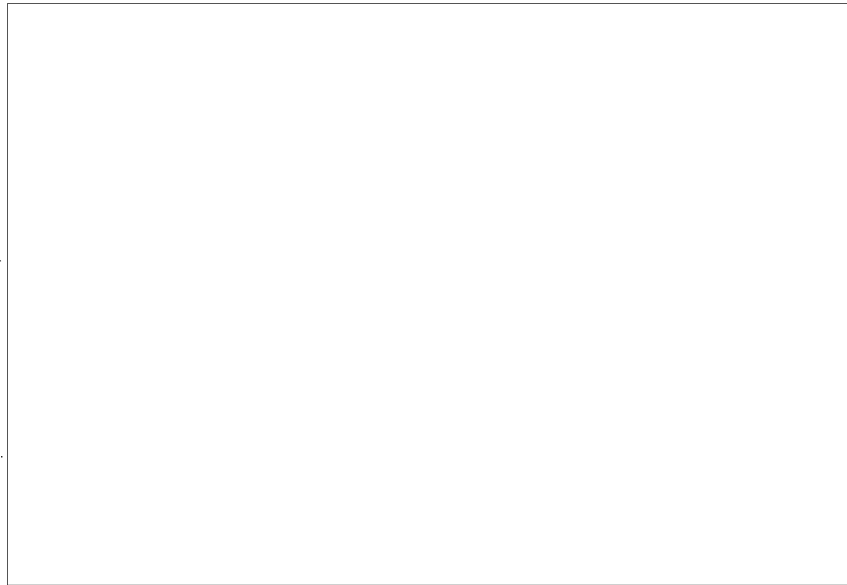
3. Turkey

Leftists are planning a mass anti-US demonstration for Saturday afternoon. The demonstration will also be protesting alleged police brutality in yesterday's disturbances. US sailors will again be ashore, but this time the Turkish security forces will be committed to protecting them.

Some Turks are drawing a disturbing analogy between yesterday's riots and the student unrest which eventually led to the army coup of 1960. We do not think too much should be made of this analogy. In 1960 the army sided with the students; this time we think it would be more inclined to help in their repression.

4. Egypt

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5. Brazil

Four thousand workers joined a wildcat strike in Sao Paulo on Wednesday and took possession of six metal-working plants. The city had a similar strike last month.

There are indications that the city's student organizations, long at odds with the government, helped organize the strike. The students are also continuing to demonstrate sporadically on their own.

It appears to us that this unrest is caused by a mixture of economic troubles and the generation gap problem familiar elsewhere. The Costa e Silva government, however, attributes the strikes and demonstrations to a Communist plot. It believes, in fact, that Brazil is now in the early stages of Communist-directed revolutionary warfare.

Accordingly, it has warned that if new disorders occur, the armed forces will be used and a state of siege declared.

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Measures such as these will not keep things under control for long.

6. Panama

Robles says he is so disgusted with the machinations of defeated candidate Samudio that he has decided to resign and leave the country. If he does so, his constitutional successor would be the first vice president, an Arias man. Such a move would probably end Samudio's efforts to get himself declared president-elect and would also smooth the transition to the new regime in October.

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7. Philippines-
Malaysia

Marcos has gotten himself out on a limb in his relations with Malaysia and now is trying to wiggle back. It was his emissary who caused the Malaysians to walk out of the talks the two countries have been holding on Manila's claim to Sabah.

Now he is trying to find a way to avoid breaking relations. A break would carry the risk of isolation from his other neighbors, who generally support Malaysia. Domestic pressures may make a rupture unavoidable, however.

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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

19 July 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Hanoi Turns Over American Fliers: Hanoi's newly created Committee for Solidarity with Progressive Americans presided over the release of the three American pilots to their pacifist escorts yesterday. The solidarity committee spokesman described the release as "a very significant action at the moment when the US Government is intensifying its criminal war of aggression against the Vietnamese people." A report of the release ceremony was carried in English in a Hanoi Radio broadcast to Southeast Asia.

The three American peace activists who received the three prisoners have made special pleas to US officials for having them return by commercial, not military, aircraft. Hanoi has made no effort to insist on this point, however, and probably does not care.

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Liberation Front Meeting: The Communists' Liberation Radio recently announced that the Liberation Front's central committee presidium held an enlarged conference on 11-13 July to "review" the situation and to set forth "immediate tasks" and policies. Such meetings take place periodically for these purposes. They are used primarily to transmit basic policies and orders formulated and passed on by the Communist leadership in Hanoi.

This Front session comes at a time when reports indicate that many Communist military units and commands are engaged in meetings to discuss new offensive operations and to conduct political indoctrinations. The meetings almost certainly are focused primarily on preparations for future military and political operations. The Front's communiqué contains the usual statement about mobilizing Communist resources to "surge forward" and to "launch relentless attacks."

Such rhetoric is not an accurate guide to immediate Communist intentions, however.

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North Vietnam and the Issue of Restraint: North Vietnam's chief negotiator in Paris, Xuan Thuy, in a recent interview with David Schoenbrun came very close to arguing that the lack of Communist attacks on Saigon is intended by the Communists to be a form of military restraint. A North Vietnamese spokesman in Paris later parried newsmen's questions about the interview, and he made the usual argument that Communist military actions are part of a fight against "US aggression."

It is increasingly apparent that Hanoi does want the current Communist military posture in South Vietnam to be interpreted as a response to US demands for de-escalation. Selected Communist combat activities probably have been tailored to give an impression of military restraint. The time, scope, and duration of the current lull are consistent with an attempt to facilitate further Communist probes of US intentions while preparations for new offensive actions are under way.

* * *

Celebration of Geneva Agreements Anniversary: In an international service broadcast on 15 July Radio Hanoi announced that the anniversary of the signing of the 1954 Geneva Agreements on 20 July will be marked by sympathetic "solidarity" demonstrations abroad. These will include rallies planned by the French peace movement and a "Week of Solidarity" scheduled by the North Koreans.

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Soviet Economic Aid: [redacted] the USSR has granted North Vietnam additional economic

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aid for 1968 and 1969, not for reconstruction but to satisfy Hanoi's current economic needs. During the recent visit to Moscow of North Vietnam's economic delegation, long-range Soviet assistance for reconstruction was discussed but no decisions were made

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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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