

*The President's Daily Brief*

*2 April 1969*

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## FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

### I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

#### VIETNAM

The Communists may be pausing in their offensive to refit some front-line units and to assess the results of their post-Tet campaign. Enemy activity throughout South Vietnam over the past several days has dropped to the lowest level noted since the offensive began nearly six weeks ago.

In I and II Corps, regroupment of a number of enemy main force units into mountain redoubts is under way. In addition, the senior Communist military headquarters in this sector has ordered a "general conference" of all unit commanders and political officers from Front 4, which is responsible for operations in the Da Nang area. A number of enemy local force units and some main force units, however, remain near allied posts and urban centers. The Communists thus remain capable of launching sporadic mortar and rocket attacks and staging limited ground attacks.

This pullback of forces has not yet spread to III Corps where Communist units remain in forward staging areas. In the delta, Communist forces also remain within a few days' march of the major allied complex of My Tho and Dong Tam. Massive allied spoiling operations and B-52 strikes evidently have been responsible for the reduced tempo of enemy attacks in III Corps and the northern delta.

The picture in the Demilitarized Zone is also mixed. The North Vietnamese have not chosen to make the DMZ into

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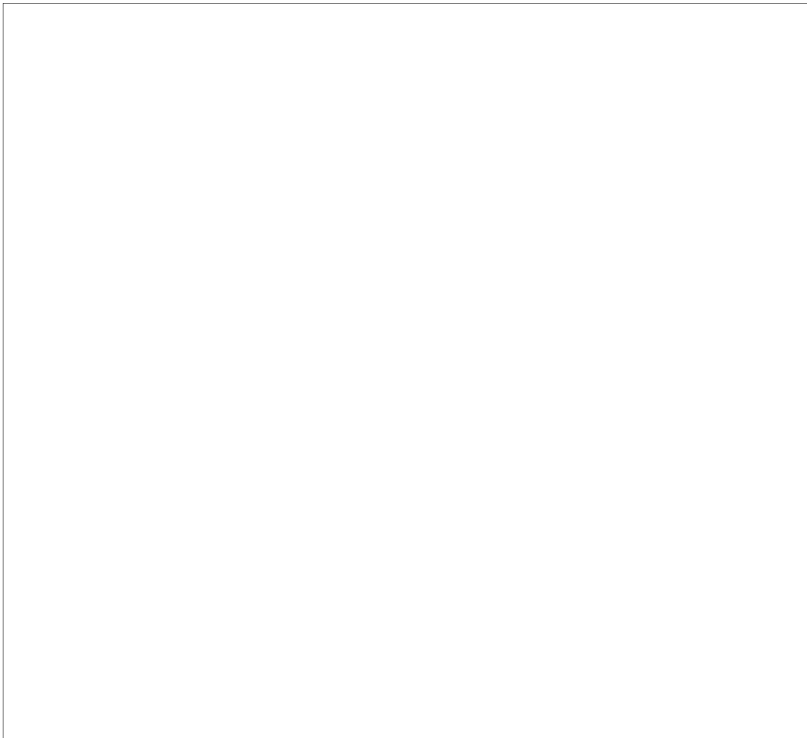
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LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF

2 APRIL 1969

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3 April 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF  
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I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

The US Embassy in Amman views Eban's concern over Iraqi troops in Jordan as a warning of a possible Israeli attack. Eban claimed on 31 March, in conversation with Ambassador Barbour in Tel Aviv, that Iraqi troop strength in Jordan had increased markedly. He intimated that Irbid, Jordan's second largest city, could be the target of Israeli reprisals if Iraqi artillery attacked Israel.

We still have no evidence of any Iraqi buildup. Iraqi troops, however, assist the Arab fedayeen, and Eban's statements, taken in the context of Israel's "active defense" policy, may mean that Israel has plans to hit the Iraqis hard again. The religious holidays that began yesterday are likely to restrain Tel Aviv from early military action.

[redacted] Central Intelligence Bulletin, 3 Apr)

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SOVIET AFFAIRS

There have been no reports overnight of further developments in the Czechoslovak situation.

VIETNAM

Enemy-initiated activity remains at a low level throughout South Vietnam. [redacted]

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There is nothing significant to report on other areas.

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a major battlefield during the current campaign, despite the deployment of several regiments into and through the area. Activity has been sporadic for several weeks, and enemy-initiated attacks there have also declined over the past few days.

Recent North Vietnamese intercepts, however, again raise the possibility that at least one additional North Vietnamese division, the 304th, may be moving southward from its holding position near Dong Hoi. These messages suggest that the 304th may be headed for an area somewhat south of the DMZ.

It is not clear whether the present lull will be only limited and temporary, or whether it presages a general pullback as occurred in June of last year and again in September and October. We are still receiving captured documents and reports from prisoners on Communist plans to sustain the offensive through April and possibly beyond.

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[redacted] Thieu's public statement of 25 March that his government was ready for private talks with the NLF [redacted] 50X1

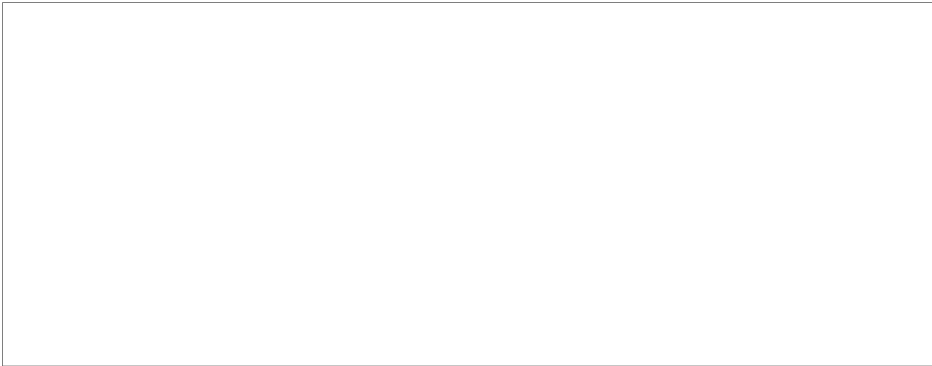
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[redacted] Although Thieu's announcement has apparently helped bring his countrymen along toward acceptance of a 50X1

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Communist role under a future settlement, there is a wide-spread feeling in South Vietnam that he made the statement under pressure from the US. Militant anti-Communists, moreover, have accused the government of proceeding "from concession to concession."

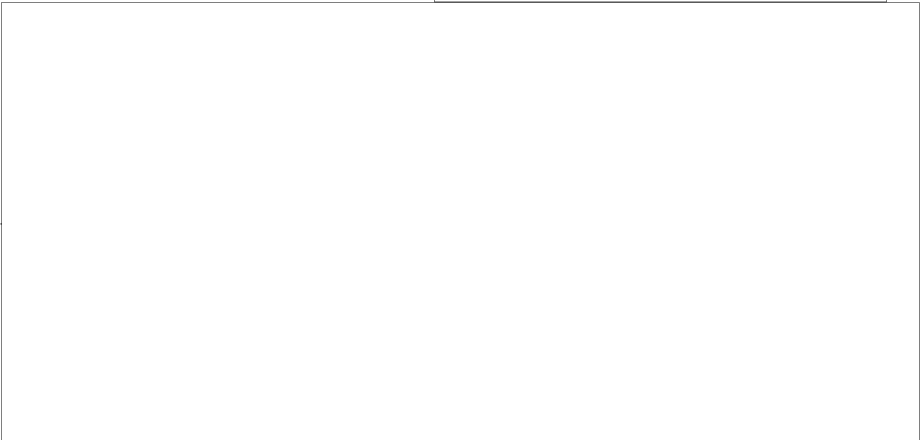


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President Thieu and his colleagues remain extremely sensitive to public statements by US leaders about a possible coalition government.



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press reports of Secretary

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Laird's statement may tend to shake the fragile consensus Thieu is trying to form on the question of reaching an accommodation with the Communists.

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The Communists have not reacted publicly as yet to Secretary Laird's interview or to his announcement yesterday that the US plans to cut back on B-52 sorties in South Vietnam after midyear. There will probably be some derogatory Communist commentary on these subjects in the next day or so, but it will not necessarily reflect real Communist assessments. The Secretary's remarks will be interpreted in Hanoi as additional evidence that the US is under strong and growing pressure to end the war, and that the US administration wants to accomplish this through a settlement negotiated in Paris.

Nothing said by Secretary Laird is likely to prompt any initiatives from the Communist side at this point. The Soviets, or even the French, however, may do some probing on Hanoi's behalf in order to get a better reading on the Secretary's remarks.

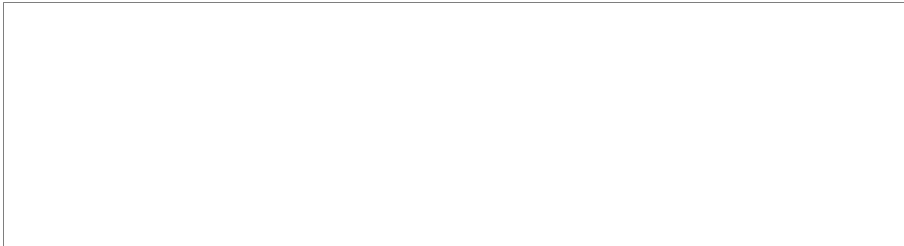
SOVIET AFFAIRS

The Czech leadership has become embroiled in its most serious crisis since the Soviet invasion, as a result of Dubcek's failure to head off anti-Soviet demonstrations last weekend.

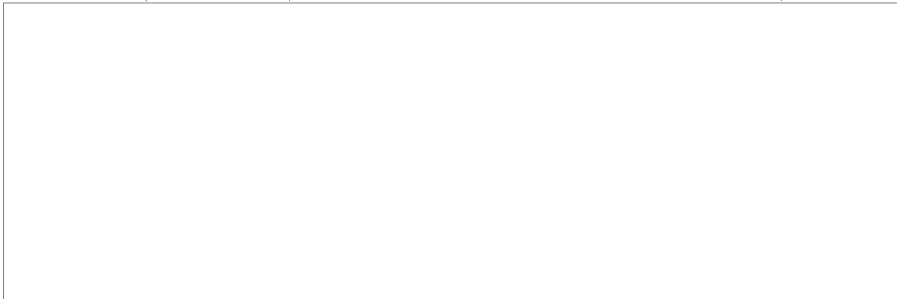
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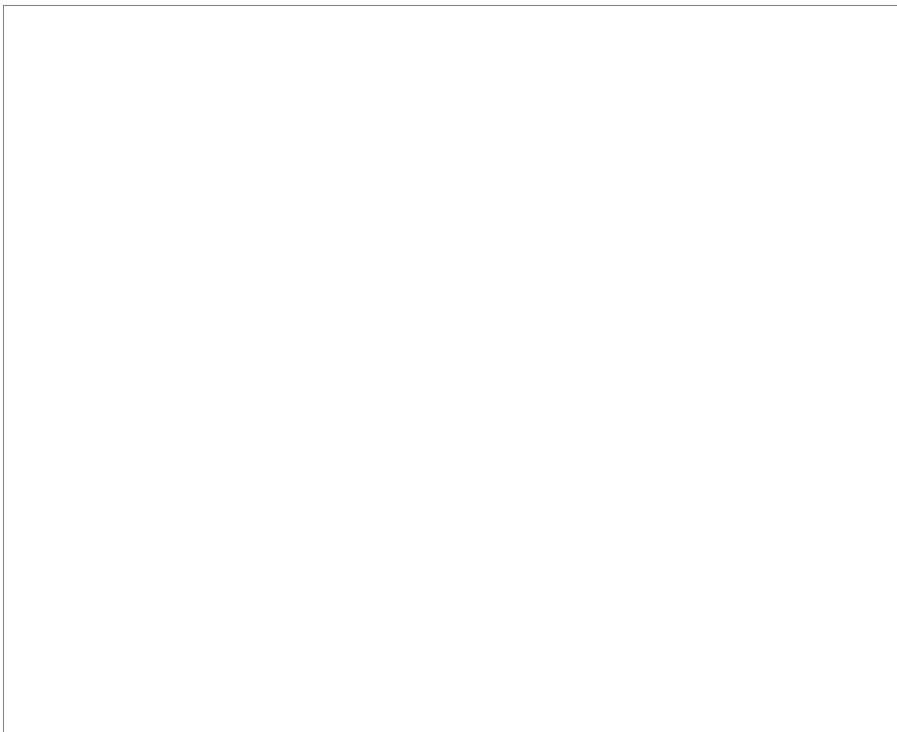


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MIDDLE EAST

The new leadership of the Syrian Baath Party, announced Monday after protracted haggling, is about equally divided between the party's two major party factions. Defense Minister Asad is probably still the dominant figure, but infighting will inevitably continue despite this week's compromise. This factionalism is largely personal rather than ideological, but we do have indications that Asad and his followers are more interested than their opponents in reducing Syria's dependence on the Soviets and in improving relations with other Arab states.

EUROPE

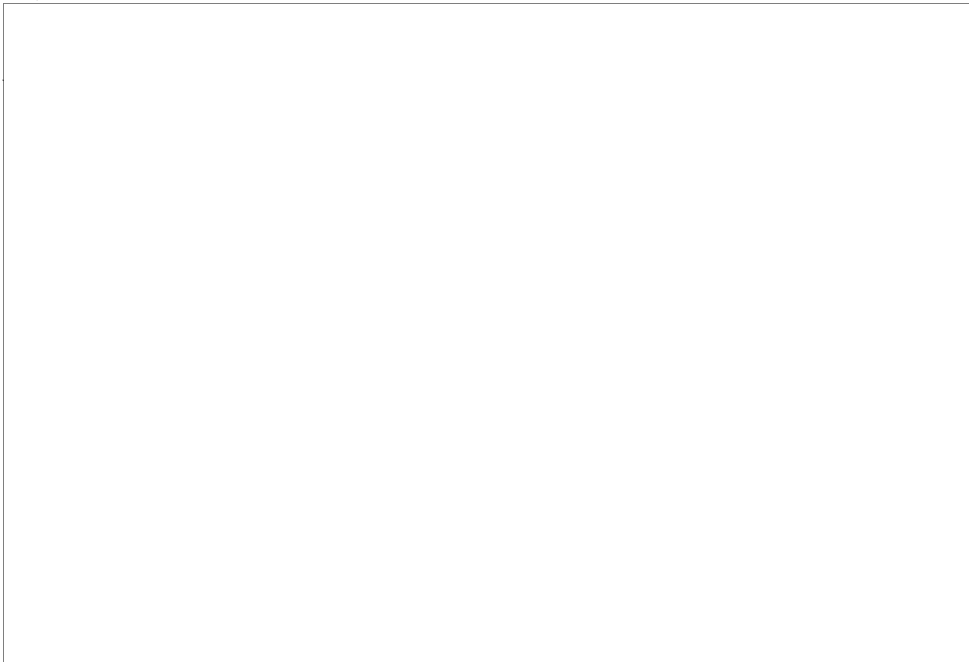
There is nothing significant to report.

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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

NIGERIA

Arms deliveries to Biafra seem likely to increase.



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In the war itself, federal forces have gone on the attack in several sectors of the Biafran perimeter, but we see no sign that decisive federal gains are in prospect.

Prime Minister Wilson is back in England after his flying trip to Africa. His statement in Parliament today tends to confirm our earlier impression that the trip did not bring the civil war appreciably closer to settlement.

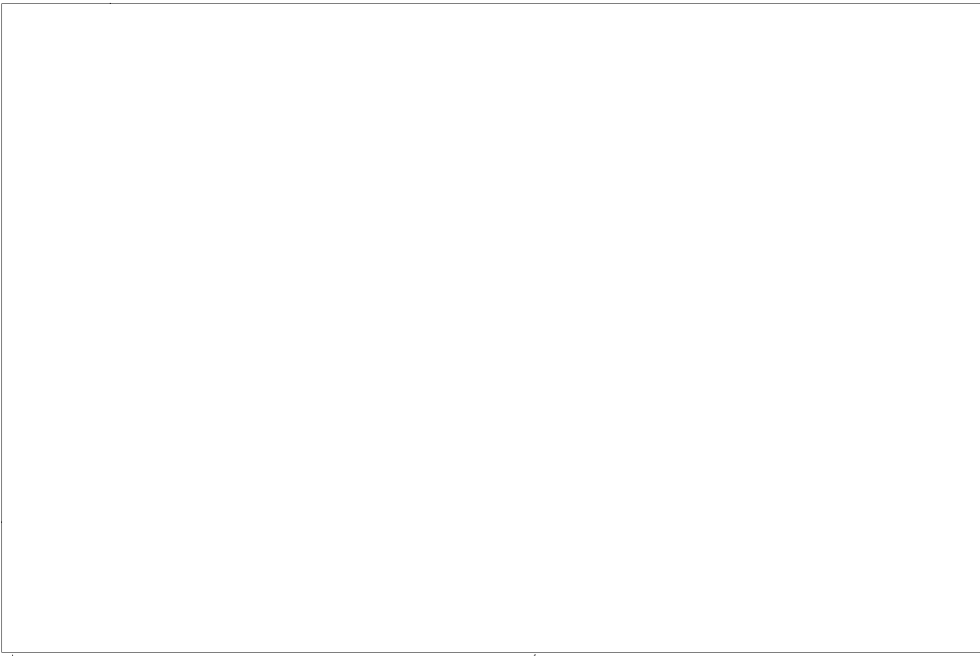
COMMUNIST CHINA

Imports by Communist China of electronic equipment and precision instruments from the Free World have risen

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sharply during the past several years, from \$3.1 million in 1961 to \$47.3 million in 1966. Although such imports dropped during 1967, possibly because of the Cultural Revolution, preliminary information shows that they rose again in 1968, perhaps to the level of 1966. Japan has been the prime source; France, the UK, and West Germany have also been important suppliers. Many of these shipments have not been in violation of controls on strategic items. Some of the equipment has non-strategic applications; in other cases, details were insufficient to indicate a clear-cut breach of the embargo.

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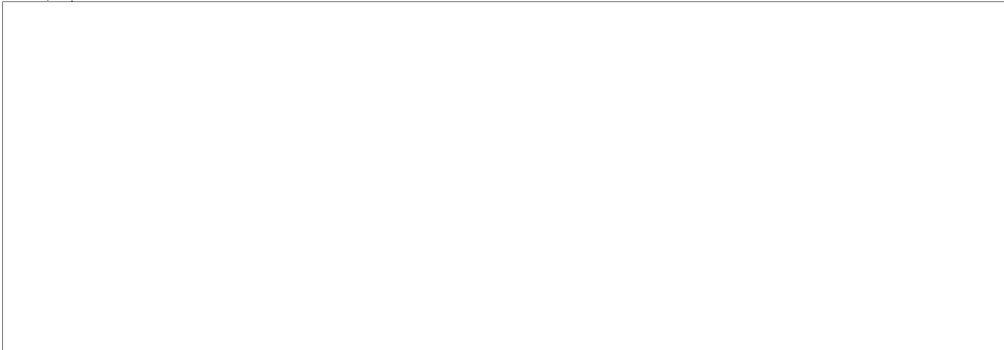


JAPAN

The government's overriding interest in Okinawan reversion is shown in the recent reshuffling of the Foreign Office to strengthen Japan's negotiating team. The main features of the reorganization include the appointment of Hiroto Tanaka

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as an aggressive roving ambassador to assist Japanese Ambassador Shimoda in Washington and the designation of deputy vice minister Haruki Mori as the coordinator of all Okinawan matters.



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