

The President's Daily Brief

14 April 1969
(Afternoon)

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15 April 1969

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

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

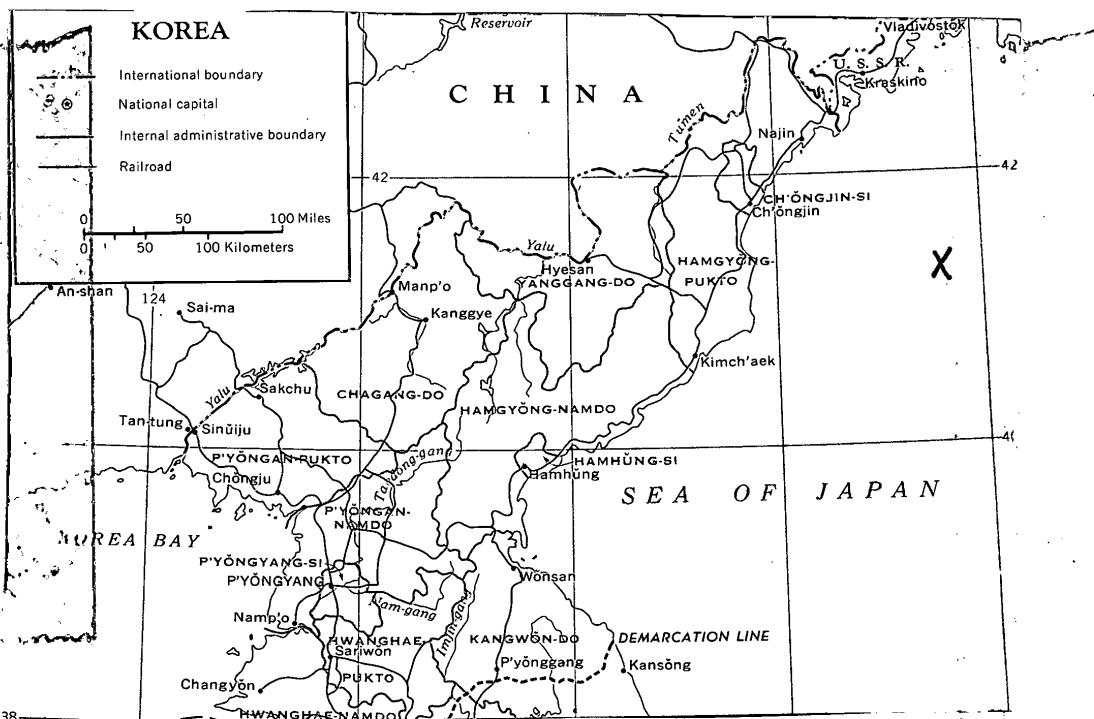
There is nothing significant to report on the Middle East, Europe, Vietnam, or Soviet Affairs.

II. OTHER MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

KOREA

North Korean fighters shot down a US reconnaissance aircraft over the Sea of Japan last night. The American aircraft, a Navy Super Constellation, was nearly 100 miles off the Korean coast when it was attacked. Pyongyang promptly broadcast a report of the shootdown, claiming the aircraft had intruded into North Korean airspace. The North Koreans have proposed a meeting of the Military Armistice Commission for Thursday.

Rescue operations have been launched, but, as yet, there is no word on the fate of the 31 crewmen aboard the aircraft.



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I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

Zaid Rifai, Husayn's private secretary, was gilding the lily a bit in the account he gave US officials last Wednesday of the Jordanian Government's relationship with the fedayeen. We have seen nothing to substantiate Rifai's assertion that the terrorists' popular support inside Jordan is declining, for instance. Nor do we credit Rifai's explanation of the recent increase in fedayeen activity: that the rules laid down last fall by Husayn's government had effectively limited the fedayeen until they became more "anarchical" in recent weeks. We believe, on the contrary, that the terrorists have if anything grown less anarchical recently and that this fact itself, coupled with the growth in the popular support they receive, accounts for their increased activity.

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Rifai did speak with surprising frankness about the need for his government to take stronger measures against the terrorists than it has in the past. It remains to be seen whether his words were tailored for US ears or whether the Jordanian Government is in fact headed for a confrontation with the fedayeen as he predicted.

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SOVIET AFFAIRS

The Soviets are increasing pressure on the Italian Communist Party to fall into line as 5 June, the date for the Conference of World Communist Parties, approaches. The Italians have been serving as unofficial leaders of the dissidents in the international Communist movement.

A number of smaller parties, including the Australians and British, backed the Italians and Rumanians in their opposition to Moscow's dominance at last month's preparatory meeting for the June conference. The Rumanians, however, disagreed with Italian tactics, [redacted] 3.3(b)(1)

[redacted] The French, who had earlier backed the Italians, this time caved in to the Soviets.

Moscow has already threatened to cut its annual subsidy to the Italian party, reputed to be in the neighborhood of 6.5 million dollars. To counter this, the Rumanians have agreed to trade deals which would net the party in Rome \$800,000 over a one to two year period. Yugoslavia is said to be considering a similar arrangement.

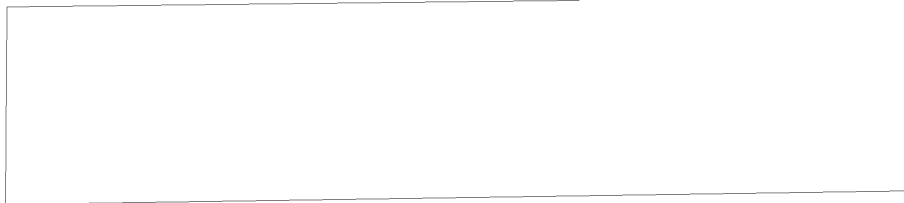
Soviet irritation with the Italian position came through clearly in a Pravda article yesterday which criticized the Italians' stand on Czechoslovakia and the Sino-Soviet border dispute and reminded them not to forget "the principles of proletarian internationalism." [redacted]

[redacted] pressure from Moscow may bring latent conflicts 3.3(b)(1)

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within the leadership to the surface,

3.3(b)(1)



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According to unconfirmed press reports, Dubcek will fly to Moscow before Thursday's central committee plenum to discuss its agenda with the Soviets. There is no indication that he has yet left Prague, but he has consulted with Moscow before previous plenums.

At the plenum, party conservatives are expected to use the increasing tension to start a bandwagon drive for retrenchment and a return to "realism." Some liberals have become disheartened; one told a US Embassy source that he doubted Dubcek was tactically astute enough to withstand a concerted conservative challenge because he has become "too romantic and at times childish."

Hungarian party chief Kadar apparently no longer supports or sympathizes with Dubcek. In a speech Friday, Kadar criticized vacillation in the Czech leadership. Yesterday's issue of Pravda quoted the criticism approvingly.

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EUROPE

There is nothing significant to report.

VIETNAM

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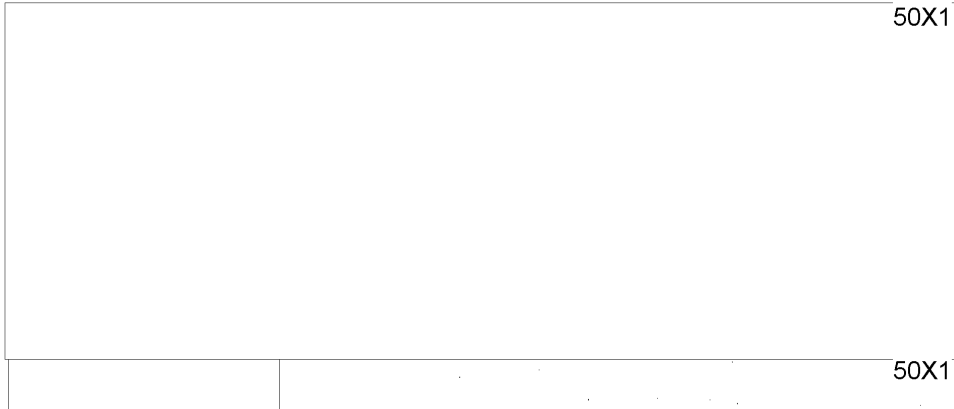
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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

NIGERIA



JAPAN

Ultraradical students are planning two weeks of potentially violent demonstrations beginning this Thursday. The immediate theme will be the demand for the return of Okinawa, but the demonstrations are part of the continuing leftist effort to block renewal of the US-Japanese security treaty next year. The extremists have tentatively scheduled "raids" on the US Embassy, the Diet, and the prime minister's residence. The police are mobilizing their largest force this year.

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