

# *The President's Daily Brief*

~~*Top Secret*~~ 28 March 1968



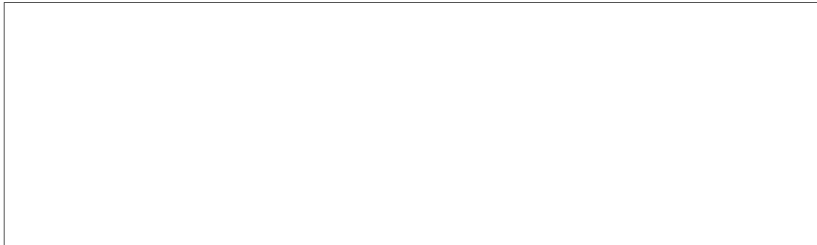
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DAILY BRIEF  
28 MARCH 1968

1. North Korea

Satellite photography of 16 March shows the USS Pueblo at the Najin naval shipyard, only about 20 miles from the Soviet border. It was moved there some time after 22 February.

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2. Israel

Last week's big raid into Jordan was costly, and the Israeli public is grumbling. Despite heavy casualties and much foreign criticism, the country's borders are no more secure now than before.

Harsh comments about government policy are being heard increasingly [redacted] and are appearing in the Israeli press. Somewhat defensively, government leaders are trying to justify the action and the hard-line policy on which it is based.

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Ambassador Barbour thinks this has become the first visible rift in a long time between the public and the government on an important security issue. Yet few Israelis in or out of government can see an obvious alternative to present government policy.

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### 3. Panama

The anti-Robles forces failed to arouse public fervor for the demonstrations they hoped to pull off yesterday, and attempts to promote a general strike have faltered. It now appears that they have little alternative but to await a judicial ruling on Robles' impeachment after the Supreme Court reconvenes next Monday.

### 4. Czechoslovakia

Dubcek intends to nominate 73-year-old General Ludvik Svoboda to fill out the remaining 18 months of Novotny's presidential term. Svoboda is something of a national hero, partly because of his World War II exploits, but he is poorly equipped to be president and will probably be little more than a figurehead for Dubcek. Svoboda's selection will nevertheless be played as a gesture to Russian feelings since he is a well-known advocate of a strong alliance with the Soviet Union.

The election of a president by the National Assembly on Saturday will not, however, be a completely cut-and-dried affair. There are other contestants.

### 5. Poland

Some Warsaw students are getting set for another round of protest action today. The uproar they created last week has already warmed up the long-simmering factional rivalries inside the top party leadership. It is too early to see where all this will lead. It is already clear, however, that for the first time Gomulka has been forced to share his tight grip on the policy levers in Warsaw.

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## 6. Greece

The junta has yet to generate much public interest in its proposed move toward constitutional government. Most Greeks remain apathetic, and leading politicians of the old regime imply that they will boycott the constitutional debate and the referendum set for late this summer.

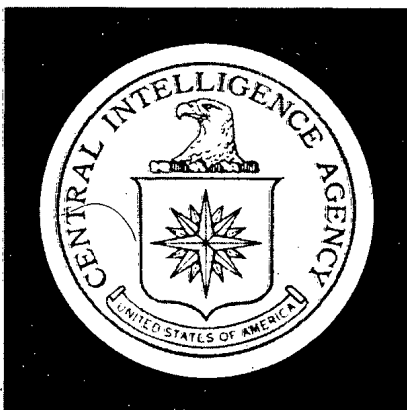
## 7. Indonesia

President Suharto got most of what he wanted from Congress yesterday-- a five-year term as full president and postponement of the scheduled congressional elections. The civilian-dominated Congress did, however, put some brakes on the emergency powers given Suharto two years ago. This should help appease those who have been worried about the predominant role of the military in the executive branch.

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*FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY*

## Special Daily Report on North Vietnam



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16  
28. March 1968

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam  
for the President's Eyes Only

28 March 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Hanoi Calls on Public for an All-out Effort: An editorial published in Hanoi's party daily on Sunday calls on the North Vietnamese public to redouble its efforts in support of the war in the South. "Now is the time," it said, "to concentrate all our forces" and devote "everything to the struggle." The theme is not new, but the editorial has an unusual sense of urgency about it. It describes current developments in the South as "a new situation." It characterizes the fighting there as "a general offensive and uprising," terms which the Communists used frequently at the start of the Tet offensive but which have been used only sparingly since then. The editorial also talks of "mobilizing" the troops and the people of the North, suggesting that a special manpower roundup may be under way.

\* \* \*

Front Interview: A prominent Liberation Front spokesman has portrayed the Communist Tet offensive as a giant step toward making the US position in the South untenable, but not as an attempt to seize power in one fell swoop. Like other Vietnamese Communist spokesmen, he offered no hints of a willingness to compromise and made clear that the Communists continue to seek a settlement wholly on their terms.

Nguyen Van Tien, the head of the Liberation Front delegation in Hanoi, told a Japanese correspondent in a two-hour interview on 25 March that "most" of South Vietnam has been "liberated" since the Tet offensive and that the allied forces are "surrounded" by a "great sea" of hostile humanity. He claimed the offensive's purpose was not to occupy the cities but to disorganize allied forces and create psychological unrest.

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Tien questioned US interest in a peaceful settlement, but he said that if Washington "respects the Vietnamese people's fundamental rights," then there are "many ways to hold talks." He made clear that North Vietnam's offer to talk in return for a bombing halt did not commit the Communists to over-all peace negotiations. He said the Front supported Hanoi's demand for an unconditional bombing halt, but he went on to stipulate that if the US wants "peace talks," it "should end its aggression in South Vietnam" and withdraw all its armed forces.

Tien dodged a question about what kind of government would appear in the South after the war. He said it would be a "highly flexible coalition government," and explained that this was made clear in the Front's political program last summer.

Tien also played down the significance of Khe Sanh and said the Communists did not consider it a second Dien Bien Phu.

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Increased Security in Hanoi: [redacted]

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[redacted] the foreigners who were recently stopped or detained for questioning include two Swedish diplomats who visited recently, the French News Agency correspondent, and the Indian military representative to the International Control Commission in Hanoi.

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It is not certain if these individuals were indiscreet in their wanderings or if North Vietnamese security forces are simply more vigilant. The latter seems likely in view of the newly published security decree.

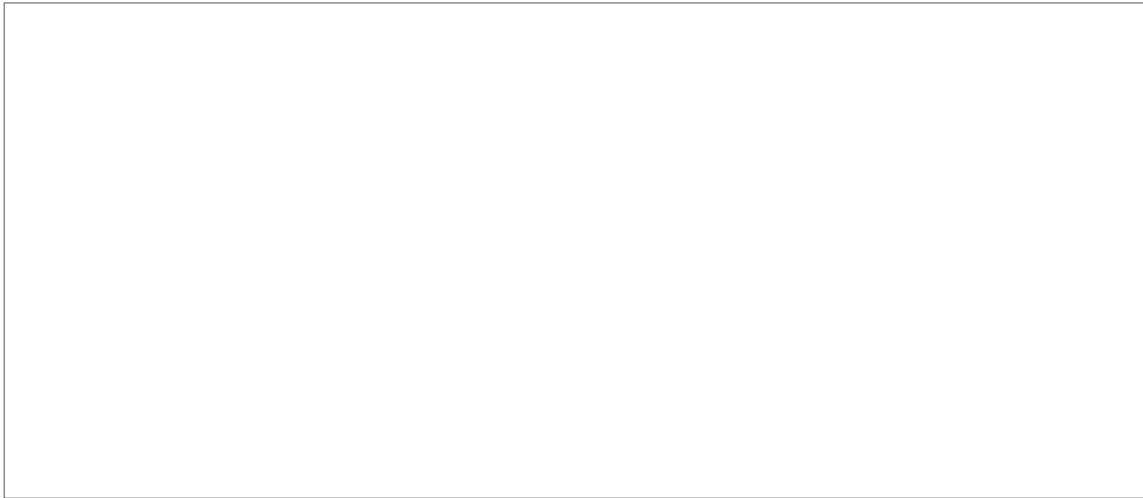
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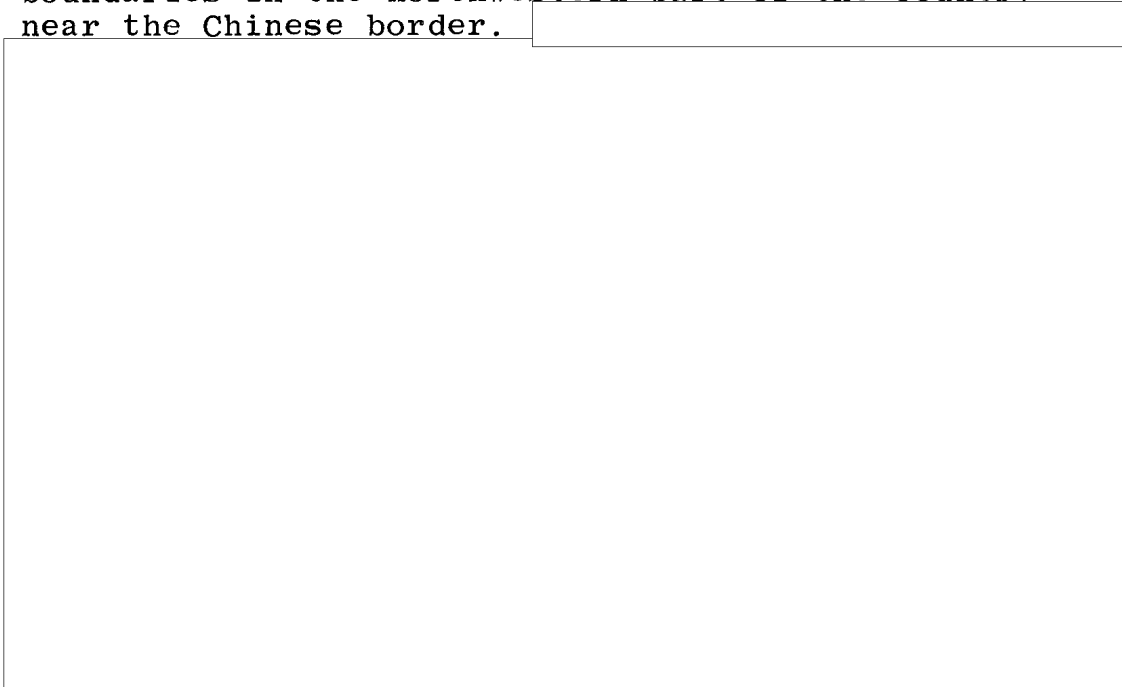


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Administrative Changes near the Chinese Border:  
Communications intelligence indicates that the North Vietnamese have adjusted their local administrative boundaries in the northwestern part of the country near the Chinese border.

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## II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

North Vietnamese Army Newspaper Comments: Hanoi's army daily on 25 March claimed that the recent Tet offensive had contributed significantly to a political crisis in the US in which President Johnson was increasingly isolated from his colleagues and his critics. The army editorial was broadcast both to audiences in North Vietnam and in English to Havana for replay to the US.

The domestic broadcast indulged in unusually harsh language, calling the US President a wounded "wild beast" who "shouted for war." The broadcast to Havana zeroed in on the President's critics within his own party and said President Johnson was facing his "darkest tragedy" since his accession to the presidency. The newspaper reported that Senator Robert Kennedy and Senator McCarthy were using the Vietnam question as a "trump card," and that the New York Senator was demanding an end to the war, a change of US policy, and the removal of the President.

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Hanoi Reports AP Criticism of Westmoreland's Strategy: Hanoi's international service on 27 March reported an analysis of US military strategy and tactics by Peter Arnett of the Associated Press. According to the broadcast, Arnett said that General Westmoreland will be remembered above all for his use of massive firepower--so massive that "aircraft and artillery are called in to do the job that infantrymen did in other wars.... More and more Americans...see this massive use of firepower as the major weakness in US military tactics in Vietnam," Arnett is represented as saying.

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"Antimilitarist" Meeting of "Black Americans": Two hundred members of the "antimilitarist movement and organizations of black Americans" met recently in Illinois, according to the Hanoi international service. The meeting allegedly drafted a "common program of action" against the war in Vietnam and against US racism, and decided to organize an antiwar demonstration next August in Chicago.

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