

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 24 April 1968



DAILY BRIEF
24 APRIL 1968

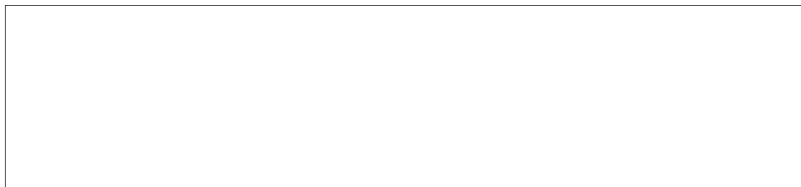
1. Vietnam

The Viet Cong radio announced yesterday that a national "congress" was held near Saigon last weekend by the Vietnam Alliance of National, Democratic, and Peace Forces. The meeting, allegedly attended by many notables from South Vietnamese cities, was said to have elected a central committee and adopted a program.

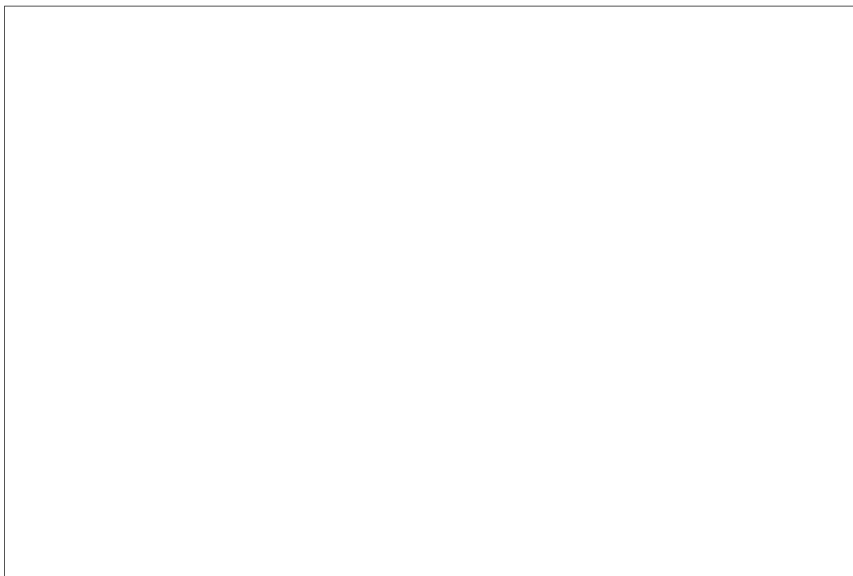
This is an obvious move to set the stage for a political settlement on Communist terms. The Communists had earlier explained that the local "alliances," which they say have been set up in various "liberated" areas since Tet, would form a national grouping. That, in turn, would ultimately join in a coalition with the National Liberation Front to replace the Thieu-Ky government.

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2. Soviet Union



3. North Korea



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4. South Korea

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5. Indonesia

Suharto, beset by domestic opposition, has altered plans for the price increases required under the anti-inflation program. Moslem radicals are threatening nationwide demonstrations if there are sharp price increases. Rather than risk bloodshed, Suharto has ordered a two-phase increase with the first step to be announced 28 April.

The second increase would come in June--but only if Suharto has enough pledges of foreign economic help to persuade the public that the recovery program would continue.

6. Communist Conference

Some 70 party delegations convene today in Budapest to begin work on the agenda for the full-scale international conference late this year. Signs are that the Rumanians and Yugoslavs will be among the missing. The Czechs are reluctant, but at this delicate juncture in their relations with Moscow, they probably feel they have no real alternative but to go.

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7. Czechoslovakia

An economist close to Deputy Premier Sik went out of his way on Monday to inquire "personally" whether the US might grant Czechoslovakia a loan. He told a US Embassy officer that the loan could be used to acquire Western consumer goods. He added that the reformers now in control badly need some kind of highly visible economic success in order to keep the "conservatives" at bay.

The economist said his meeting with the embassy officer had been cleared with Sik, but that his question about a loan was his own. [redacted]

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8. Cuba

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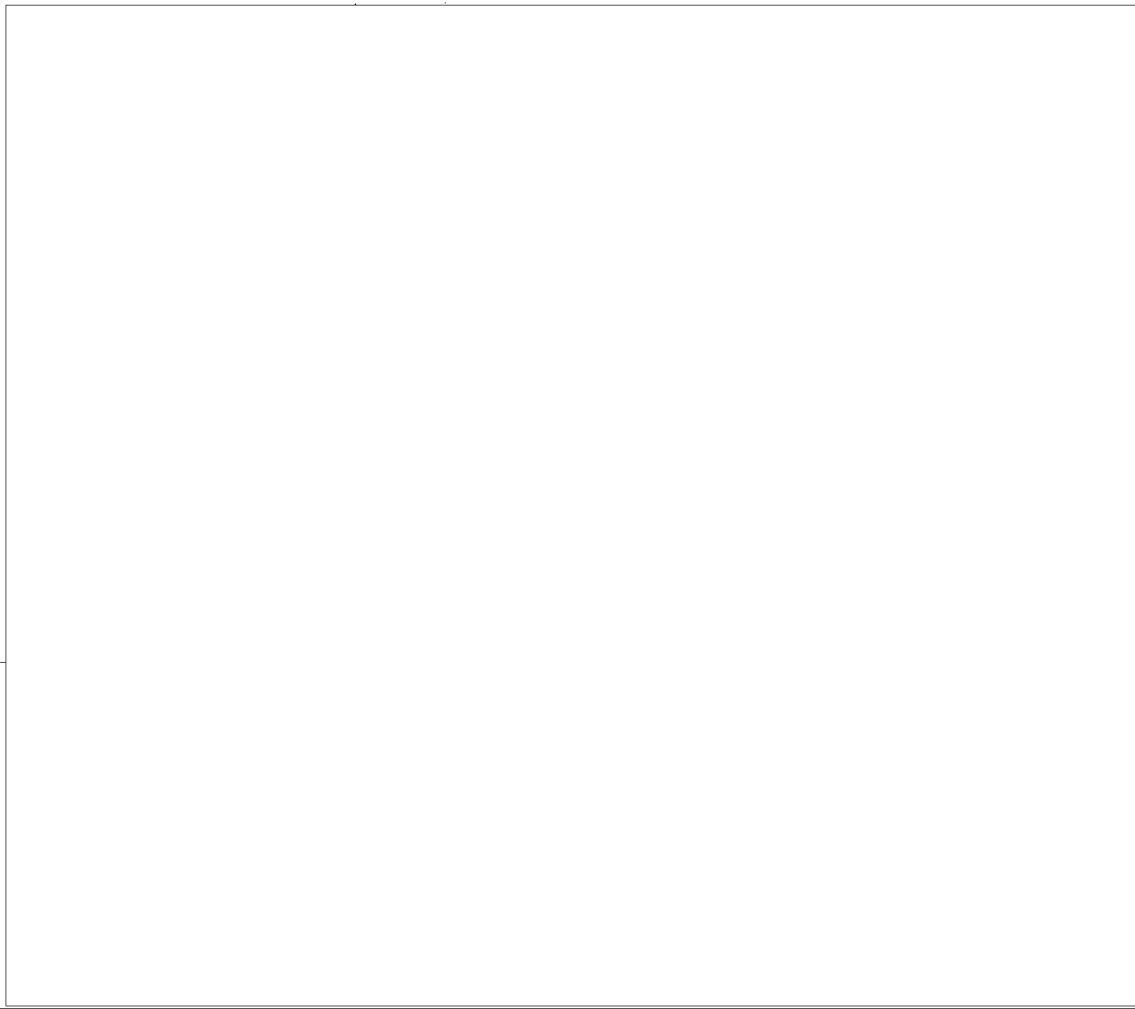


Top Secret

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

24 April 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION



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Hanoi Propaganda: North Vietnamese media continue to make propaganda hay over the site issue. Hanoi has offered nothing new in its treatment during the past several days; Phnom Penh or Warsaw are offered on a take-it-or-leave-it basis.

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A Nhan Dan article broadcast yesterday rebuts Secretary Clifford's weekend statements with a charge that they were intended to fend off world criticism of the US. US arguments, it said, are "unsound and ill-meant," and "cannot hold water." The paper quotes Western press stories critical of US policy and claims that in the midst of this "propaganda ploy," the US is stepping up its attacks on North Vietnam as well as the pace of the war in the South. It takes note of Representative Mendel Rivers' "threat" on 20 April that the US will use greater military force if the North does not accept US conditions for talks. The article closes with a familiar line that the world is demanding that the US "prove its good will, if any," by agreeing to either Phnom Penh or Warsaw for contacts with Hanoi.

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North Vietnamese in Mexico: The long-planned visit to Mexico by Hanoi's ambassador in Cuba began yesterday. On arriving at the Mexico City airport, the North Vietnamese told newsmen that his visit is "a friendly one, to explain my government's viewpoints." He is scheduled to meet today with Foreign Minister Carrillo Flores, and presumably will see President Diaz Ordaz later on. He will be in Mexico until Friday.

Mexican newsmen have been quick to speculate that Hanoi intends to propose Mexico City as the site for US - North Vietnamese contacts.

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A New Viet Cong Appeal to the South: The Viet Cong radio on 20 April broadcast a Communist version of a "Chieu Hoi" appeal. It was an elaboration of previous Communist efforts to encourage defections among civilian workers of the Saigon government and South Vietnamese troops. This time, however, the Communists tried to create a sense of urgency by characterizing the present situation as "decisive" and "historic." The appeal strongly implied an anticipated increase in the tempo of military activity by using such language as "seething and fierce," and "constant offensive and comprehensive uprising" to describe the current period.

The appeal was directed specifically at South Vietnamese officers, troops, and policemen. It offered special citations and awards to anyone who cooperates with the "revolutionary armed forces" in destroying outposts, warehouses, airfields, wharves, or prisons.

The appeal seems to be saying that South Vietnamese officials will have plenty of opportunity to cooperate with the Communists in the coming weeks. It says that "during attacks on cities and provincial and district capitals by revolutionary forces," those who cooperate "will be noted for their achievements."

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Haiphong Rail and Highway Bridge: Photography of 19 April shows that Haiphong's only rail and highway bridge is apparently serviceable again. It was last attacked in March.

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Thai Nguyen Thermal Power Plant: Photography of 18 April shows that the Thai Nguyen Thermal Power Plant--last bombed in August 1967--is probably operational. Smoke is seen coming from a flue leading to the generator hall, and coal piles near the generator hall show use. It is believed that the plant is partially operational and that its reconstruction is likely to continue.

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