

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 1 June 1968



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**THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
1 JUNE 1968**

1. France

France seems to be pulling back from civil war. The general strike is losing momentum, although the railway workers and some others say they will stay off the job. The established unions are concentrating on case-by-case negotiations with employers. In most cases they are getting deals which are better than the concessions announced last weekend. Some union leaders think the strike will be largely over by the middle of next week.

Just as De Gaulle has diverted the unions into traditional economic channels, his call for elections has gotten the politicians thinking in traditional terms again. Political leaders of all colorations are busily getting ready for the elections late this month. The old splits between the Communist and the non-Communist left have already reappeared.

The students and unorganized workers who touched off the crisis are as unhappy as ever, but they too have lost much of their momentum. A good many of the grievances which turned this into the biggest strike in French history are still present, however, and may return to haunt De Gaulle.

The French general staff is on 24-hour alert, but the generals do not think the army will be needed unless the dissidents unexpectedly start shooting.

Our embassy estimates that the strike has already knocked about two percentage points off this year's economic growth rates in France. The Bank of France has used up most of its readily available foreign exchange reserves. The bank is activating emergency arrangements with other financial institutions, including the US Federal Reserve.

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2. North Vietnam

Le Duc Tho, one of the top-ranking figures in the North Vietnamese Communist hierarchy, is scheduled to arrive in Paris on Monday to join Hanoi's delegation as a "special adviser."

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Tho was with the Communist forces in South Vietnam in the 1950s, and his absence from the Hanoi public scene since late 1967 suggests that he may recently have been back in the South. He brings to Paris a reputation as an outspoken hardliner, a standing at home which probably gives him some real decision-making authority, and an expertise which will serve the delegation well when South Vietnamese questions arise.

The addition to Hanoi's delegation of a high-ranking expert on South Vietnam will doubtless not go down well with the South Vietnamese Government.

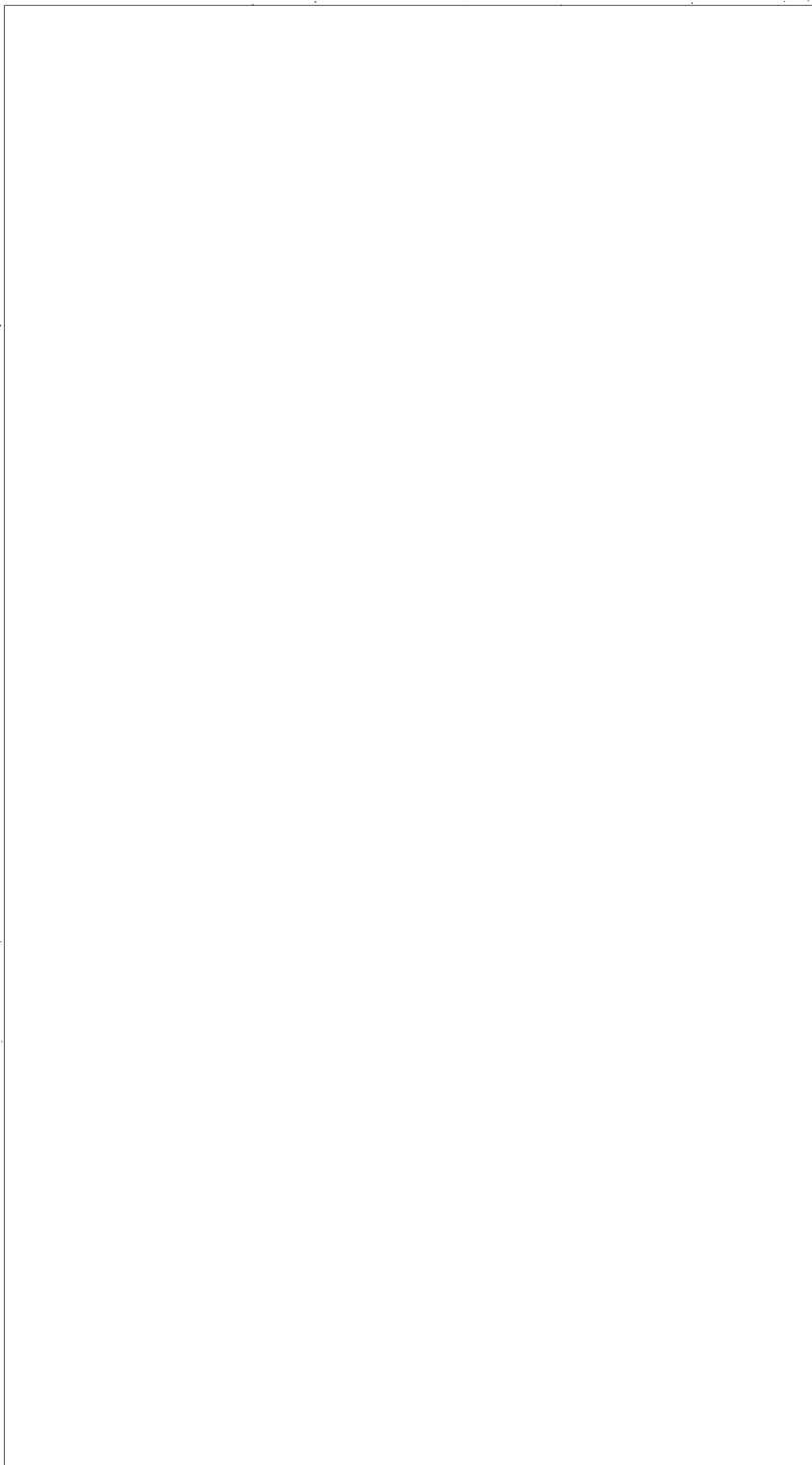
3. Ecuador

Ecuadorans go to the polls Sunday to elect a president in the first reasonably honest election in the country's history. There are three candidates--incumbent President Arosemena is not one of them--and present indications are that they will divide the vote almost evenly. Former president Velasco, an aging rabble rouser, may have a slim lead.

The campaign has been hard and sometimes bitter, but we believe the elections will come off without serious violence. The postelection period may be a different story. Defeated Ecuadoran politicians have always been loathe to abide by the verdict of the polls.

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**4. France -
Middle East**



5. Jordan-Israel

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[redacted] there is another Israeli troop build-up in progress along the Jordanian border. The Egyptian news agency has also picked up the story.

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6. Canada - Communist China

Canada is moving toward recognition of Communist China. Canadian public opinion overwhelmingly favors such a move, and Prime Minister Trudeau has made much of the issue during the current election campaign. Concrete steps toward recognition are also an easy way for Trudeau to differentiate his policies from those of Lester Pearson.

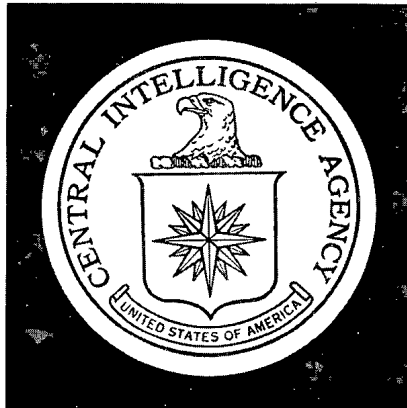
The sticky point is Taiwan. Peking will almost certainly insist that Canada break with Taipei, but Trudeau says he will not do this. He may hope the Chinese Nationalists will solve the problem for him by breaking with Ottawa on their own.

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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

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Hanoi's Foreign Minister Gives Interview: In a recent interview with a visiting Hungarian delegation broadcast over Hungarian radio on 31 May, North Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh underscored Hanoi's present fight-talk strategy. He praised the Communist forces for the "successes" they have achieved since Tet and pointed out that the aim of the Vietnamese people is to "score further major military and political victories and to get nearer to ultimate victory." Trinh singled out the recent formation of the National Alliance as one of the more significant political victories in the present struggle.

On the diplomatic front, the foreign minister repeated Hanoi's contention that the US had been forced into the Paris talks and accused the US of stubbornly refusing to recognize that the primary purpose of the talks is to determine the cessation of the US bombing of North Vietnam. Trinh also derided the concept of reciprocity without actually ruling it out and sidestepped the issue of Northern forces fighting in the South by claiming that this was a sheer misrepresentation of the facts.

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Diplomat's Visit to Helsinki: Finnish officials have given the US Embassy in Helsinki an account of the recent "purely informative" visit of the North Vietnamese ambassador to Moscow. The ambassador, who arrived on 28 May and departed for Moscow yesterday, told the Finnish foreign minister that cessation of US bombing attacks and military activities against North Vietnam were the sine qua non for success of the Paris negotiations. He rejected the de-escalation concept, stating that once the bombing and other activities stopped, Hanoi would be willing to discuss any subject.

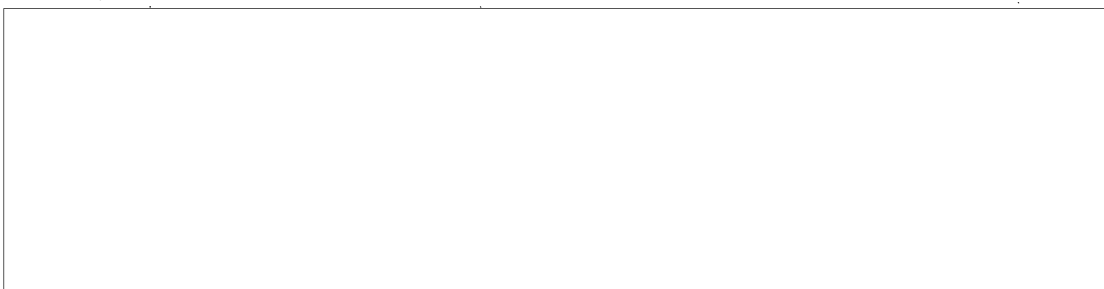
The North Vietnamese diplomat, who is said to have made a favorable personal impression, also expressed appreciation for Finland's "truly neutral position" in not recognizing the Saigon government and did not ask for Finnish recognition of Hanoi.

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Captured Pilot Comments on Paris Talks: Hanoi's English language broadcast to American servicemen in South Vietnam on 30 May contained the first alleged statement by a captured American pilot on the Paris talks. The unidentified pilot stated that he viewed the talks in France as a sign of hope and reported that he was being given material on the discussions. He also noted that he was "concerned" with the US position during the talks and observed that "Harriman speaks for the US Government and not for the majority of Americans." The pilot went on to endorse Hanoi's demand for an unconditional cessation of the bombing, stating that this position "is reasonable and justified because the US had no right to attack North Vietnam." The pilot closed with a plea for peace and for an end to this "senseless war in Vietnam."

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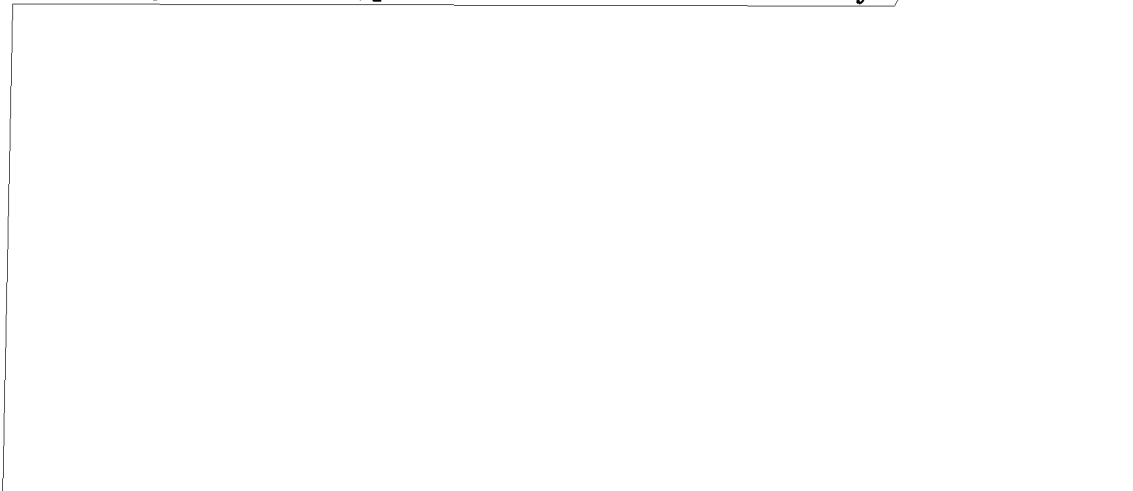
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Foreign Shipping During May: Cargo deliveries to North Vietnam by foreign flag ships in May totaled 223,000 tons, some 28,000 tons more than the previous monthly record import level set in January.

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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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