

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 20 June 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
20 JUNE 1968

1. North Vietnam

There is no confirmation of press speculation that the North Vietnamese have been ferrying Styx coastal defense missiles into the Demilitarized Zone by helicopter. Hard evidence is lacking, but there are several reasons to doubt that this analysis is correct.

If in fact Styx missiles are in North Vietnam, they could be fired from less vulnerable positions farther north along the coast. In addition, the North Vietnamese in the past are known to have brought heavy artillery and equipment into the Demilitarized Zone by land; moving Styx missiles this way would be considerably less risky than by helicopter.

We also doubt that the North Vietnamese would want to expose their big helicopters (they have only four large enough for this kind of operation) in an area where the US has air and naval superiority.

2. Berlin

Willy Brandt's lengthy talk with Soviet Ambassador Abrasimov two days ago contained no surprises, according to Embassy Bonn. In briefing allied diplomats, the West German Foreign Office claimed that the Russian offered no compromises, and defended the East German measures in much the same tone as had other Soviet ambassadors in Western capitals. Abrasimov stressed, however, that Moscow wants no aggravation of the situation.

The Foreign Office also confirms that Bonn does not want to take countermeasures in interzonal trade at this time.

3. Soviet Union

Pravda yesterday carried a detailed reply to President Johnson's recent statements on improving US-Soviet relations. In essence, the article says that the US must first act to solve outstanding problems--above all the "aggression" in Vietnam. Then there are other obstacles:

--US support for Israel;

--Trade discrimination against the Soviets and their allies; and

--"Further militarization" of the US and its allies.

The article claims that the President's appeals are indicative of growing public sentiment in the US which must be reckoned with by those now in office and those running for office. It implies that the Soviets would respond favorably if the US shows that it is "really interested."

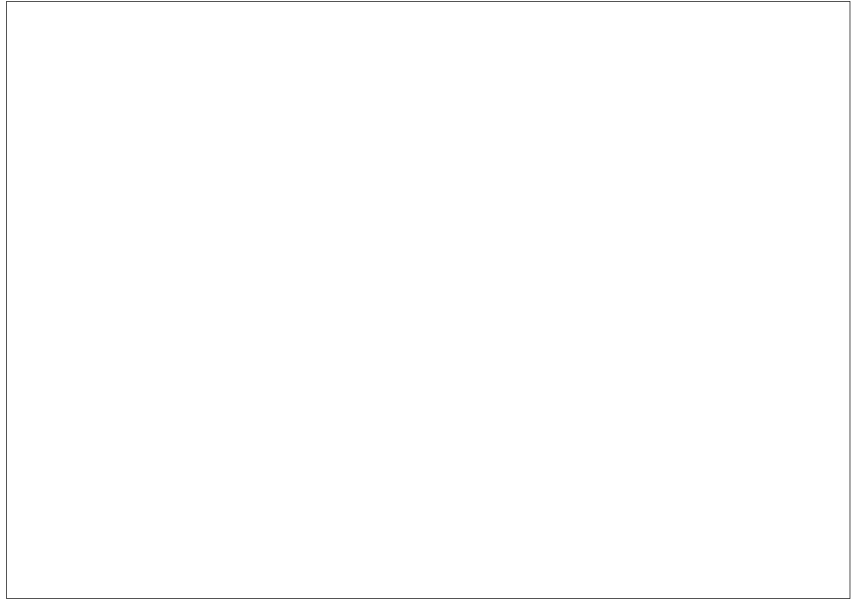
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5. Israel

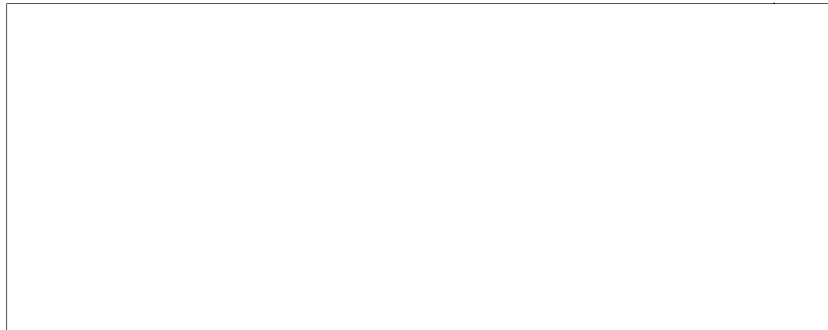
Moshe Dayan claims that 108 Israeli soldiers and 20 civilians have been killed by the Arabs since the end of the Six Day War. By comparison, about 700 Israelis were killed in the war itself. This steady drain can only buttress the case Dayan and other "hawks" have been making for punitive raids across the cease-fire lines.

6. Iraq



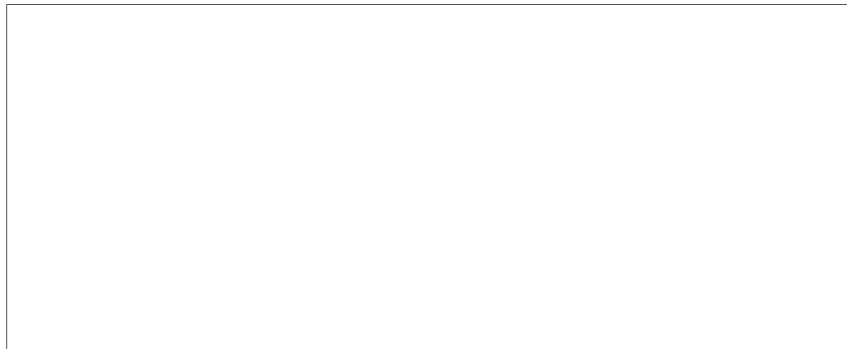
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7. Panama



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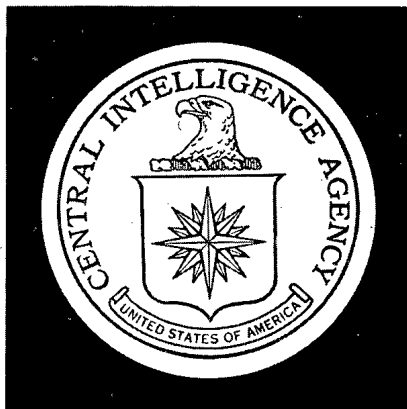
8. Mexico



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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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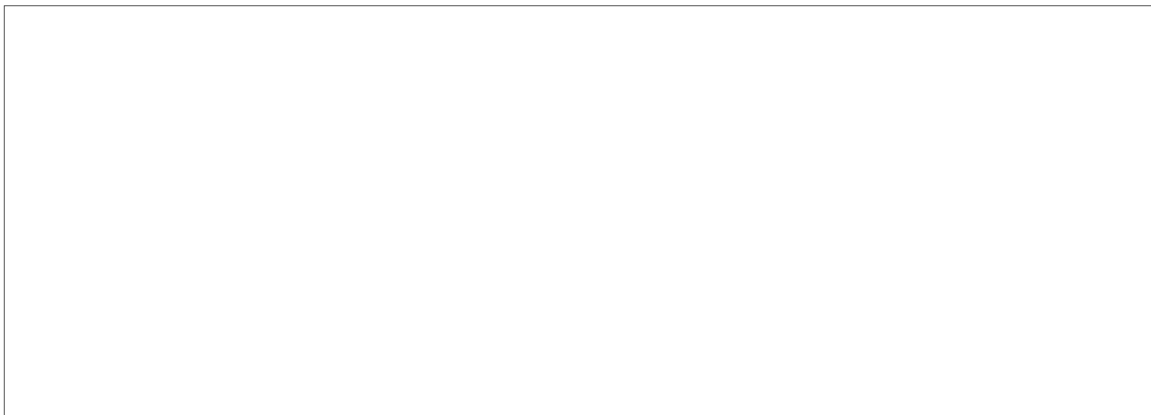
I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Front Says Local Governments are Mushrooming:
The Communists continue to lay the groundwork for claiming extensive new territorial control since their Tet offensive. Liberation Radio claimed on 18 June that local "people's governments" are being set up "everywhere." The commentary maintained that these "governments" developed spontaneously in both urban and rural areas, in the wake of current Communist offensives. The broadcast makes no effort to tie these local organizations into either the Liberation Front or its new partner, the National Alliance. A wide variety of nomenclature is used for the "governments," and the movement is portrayed as having no direction. This recalls the way Liberation Radio talked about local chapters of the Alliance in the period of the Tet fighting.

The commentary highlights the development of such groups in Saigon and the delta, but claims that they are coming to life all over Vietnam. In Saigon, the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth precincts all reportedly have "self-management committees," and in the delta the people allegedly are electing "people's councils" and "people's revolutionary committees" at a rapid rate.

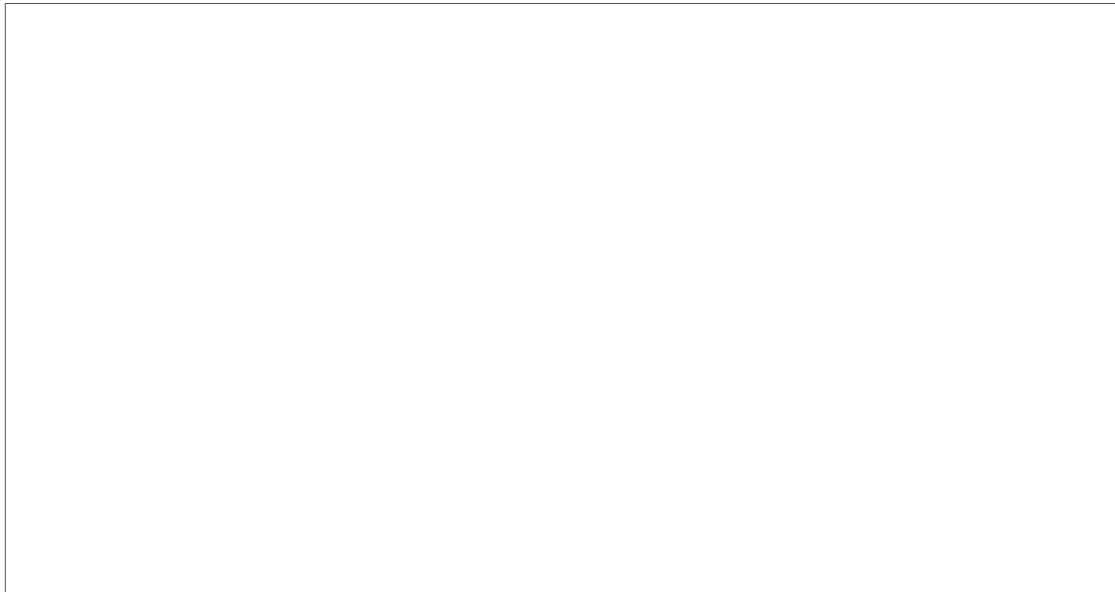
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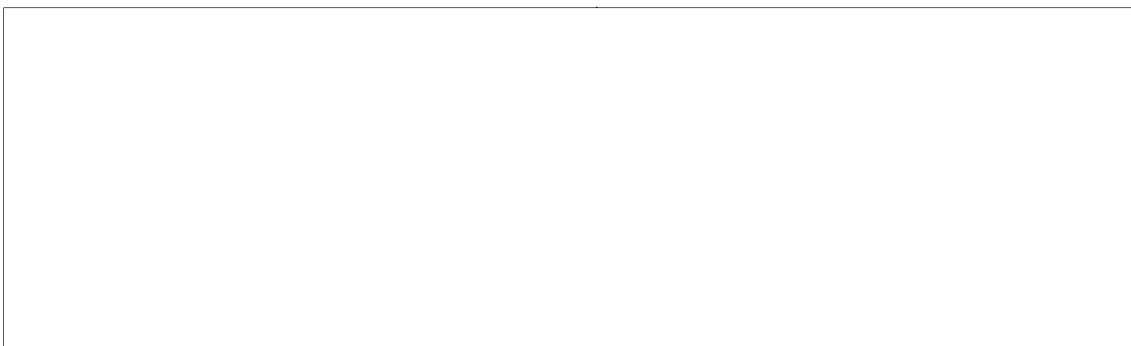
Front Claims South Vietnamese Desertions: The Liberation Front, in a statement summarized in English on 19 June over Hanoi's international service, claimed that 1,200 South Vietnamese troops, militiamen, and other members of the "puppet army" have gone over to the Viet Cong. The mass desertion allegedly took place in the delta after "thousands" of local civilians visited government forces to paint a rosy picture of life on the Communist side.

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[redacted] the Front's account may be intended to counter the surrender of about 120 Communist troops north of Saigon on Tuesday.

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



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McCarthy Welcome: The North Vietnamese delegation in Paris expressed willingness to meet with Senator McCarthy if he comes to Paris in July, according to a Reuters report of June 18. A North Vietnamese press spokesman said McCarthy is welcome to call on the delegation and added that the North Vietnamese have so far received everyone who has wanted to see them.

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