

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 13 July 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
13 JULY 1968

LATE ITEM

Soviet Union -
Czechoslovakia

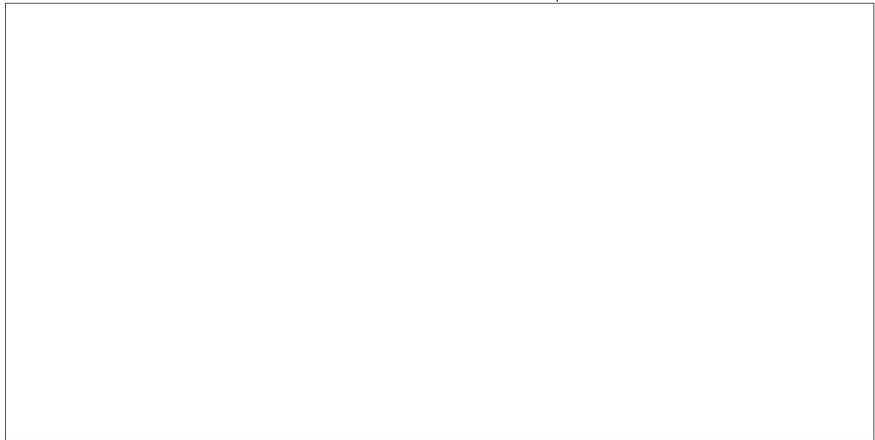
The Czech news agency announced 50X1
this morning that Soviet troops, "es-
pecially communications and signals
units," have begun to leave Czecho-
slovakia. 50X1

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1. Soviet Union -
Czechoslovakia

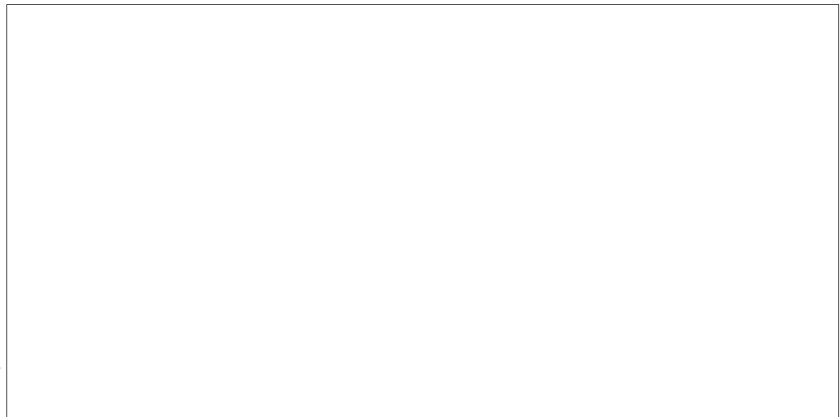


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with Prague's assertions that a troop withdrawal will begin today. Quite clearly, the troops play an important part in the orchestration of Soviet pressure. We assume that unless Dubcek caves in, Moscow will want to keep some forces on the scene as long as it can--preferably until the Czech party congress in September. We have seen no sign of Dubcek's caving in, and we do not expect to. A retreat now would mean the demise of his regime and might even lead to a popular rebellion.

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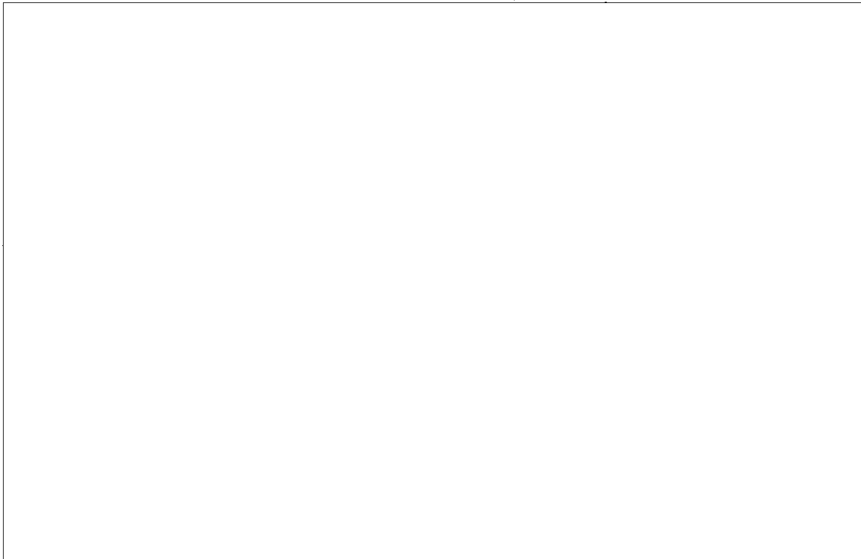
2. Middle East



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3. Nigeria



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4. Greece

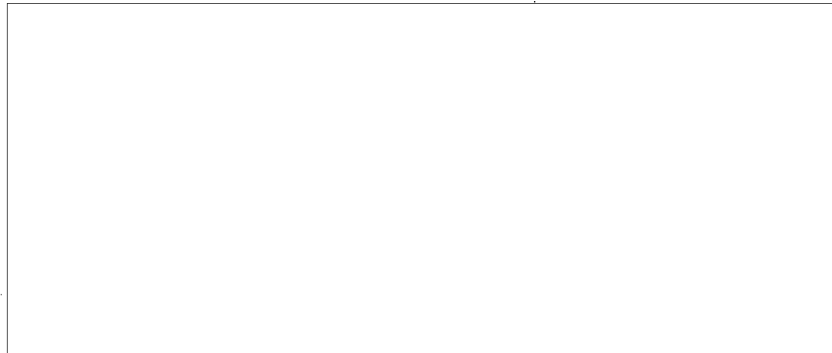
The Greek Government's draft constitution runs true to form. It is a loosely worded document which cuts back the prerogatives of both the monarchy and the legislature. A good many members of the government wanted these two institutions limited even more severely, but Papadopoulos held the line.

The populace is to vote on the draft in a referendum which is now scheduled for 29 September. If the vote is favorable, the constitution will probably be put into effect in stages.

Papadopoulos has sent an emissary to King Constantine with a copy of the draft. Constantine's reaction after a hasty reading is that he can live with it. He plans to make no public comment.

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5. Communist China

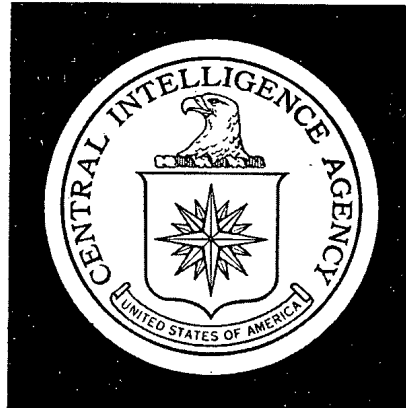


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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam

- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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13 July 1968

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

13 July 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Comments of Swedish Diplomat: Sweden's Ambassador Petri, en route for home leave from his post in Peking, passed along some miscellaneous comments to the US Embassy in Moscow on 11 July. These were based mainly on conversations with the North Vietnamese ambassador to China and on his earlier trips to Hanoi.

Petri was told by his North Vietnamese colleague that the rail line from China to North Vietnam had been "broken" near Nan-ning for about three weeks. The flow of military supplies had been disrupted but the Chinese continued to send rice by sea. The North Vietnamese had considerable stockpiles of military supplies, however, and were not worried unless there was a prolonged disruption.

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Petri voiced the standard judgment that Hanoi would be "very flexible" about withdrawal of US forces from the South but adamant about not dealing with the present South Vietnamese Government. He saw no early break in the North Vietnam position at the talks but thought that eventually some move would be surfaced through a third party.

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Sino-Vietnamese Differences: The North Vietnamese News Agency's treatment of the current visit of Vice Premier Le Thanh Nghi to Peking underscores the differences between the two countries about the Paris talks. Unlike Peking's account in yesterday's Daily Report, the North Vietnam agency did not carry the derogatory Chinese remarks about negotiations, but picked up a reference by Le Thanh Nghi to the Paris talks which the Chinese version had not carried.

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These variations in coverage are the usual way differences are expressed. They do not alter the judgment that both Hanoi and Peking are using the occasion to stress unity.

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POW Release: The trio of peace activists en route to pick up the three American fliers in Hanoi were interviewed during a stopover in Bangkok on 11 July. They said they feared US officials might insist the pilots be returned on a US military aircraft. They stressed that North Vietnamese officials had said the release was a "humanitarian gesture." One of the activists added that Governor Harriman was "not very sensitive" to the meaning of this. The group thought the pilots should be allowed to choose whether they want to go home via military or commercial aircraft.

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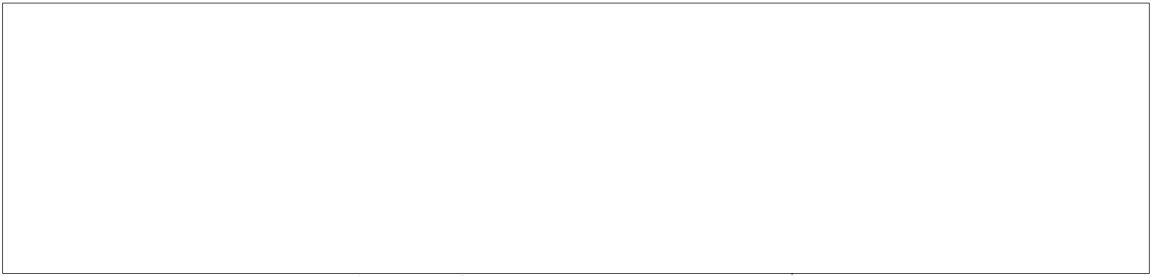
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Mongolian Aid: Hanoi radio's international service in English announced yesterday that a Mongolian delegation was received by Ho Chi Minh and Premier Pham Van Dong and had delivered a letter concerning Mongolia's so-called economic and military aid to North Vietnam for 1969. No details were given. The occasion was enlivened by a "grand meeting" held to celebrate the 47th anniversary of the founding of the Mongolian regime.

* * *

Moscow-Hanoi Aid Agreement: Soviet propaganda media have failed to make any substantive comment on the new economic and military aid agreement which climaxed the visit of Deputy Premier Le Thanh Nghi to Moscow on 4 July. A general canvass of opinion by the US Embassy reveals no hard information. Speculation centers around increased economic aid to restore industrial facilities now spared from bombing and more small arms to replace hardware lost during the Tet offensive.

These opinions generally coincide with our view that as well as arranging for continuing economic and military support, Hanoi also was attempting to find out how much assistance might be available for a relatively long-range rehabilitation plan. Some of the agreements concluded earlier during Le Thanh



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Nghi's tour of Eastern Europe call explicitly for the acquisition of complete plants. Construction work under way in Hanoi, however, continues to be limited to repairing bomb damage.

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

Hanoi Sponsors New Committee: On 11 July, Radio Hanoi's international service in English announced the founding of the Vietnam Committee for Solidarity with the American People. It cited as reasons the "ceaseless struggle" of the American and Vietnamese people to end the war in Vietnam and the increased contacts between American antiwar groups and the Vietnamese people.

According to the broadcast, the committee hopes to:

--Develop friendship between Vietnamese and Americans;

--Support cultural and economic exchanges;

--Acquaint the Americans with the history and culture of the Vietnamese people and with their struggle to defend their independence and freedom;

--Encourage an exchange of views to increase understanding and to "coordinate struggles."

Hanoi may plan to promote the new solidarity committee by having it handle the visit of the three US pacifists coming to arrange the release of the captured pilots.

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