

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 23 October 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
23 OCTOBER 1968

1. Panama

With Arias out of the Canal Zone, tensions continue to abate in Panama. The flow of messages recognizing the junta has begun.

Arias' exploits yesterday will doubtless prompt the junta to keep a wary eye on him for some time to come.

2. South Vietnam

We have another example of the sort of coup-plot rumors that are peddled to Thieu.

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There is no other information that would suggest there is any more substance to this story than to the earlier ones which triggered alerts, and, considering the furor he stirred earlier this month, Thieu probably will move this time with more circumspection. He is not clapping Ky's Air Force friends in jail, but, given Thieu's highly suspicious frame of mind, he can be counted on to keep a close watch on them.

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3. Warsaw Pact -
Czechoslovakia

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted] two more Soviet divisions will pull out of Czechoslovakia early next week.

[Redacted]

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4. Israel -
Arab States

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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The Israeli cabinet is thinking of making a statement to Jarring on the territorial question, but Deputy Premier Allon told our chargé yesterday that he thought the cabinet would not authorize any new moves without advance assurance of support from the US. Allon made it clear that any Israeli statement would propose substantial changes in prewar boundaries.

Allon last week put a further chill in the atmosphere by announcing that more agricultural and urban settlements were to be established in those occupied areas which are "vital for Israeli security or of special historical significance for Jews."

5. North Korea -
South Korea

More North Korean infiltrators were killed in the week ending last Monday than in any other seven-day period this year. In previous years, infiltration has slacked off in the fall, in part because the disappearing foliage makes the effort more hazardous. Pyongyang's persistence this year probably can be traced to dissatisfaction with the results of the regular-season campaign.

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[Redacted]

6. Japan

The far left's emphasis on violence, coupled with police restraint, seems to have further eroded the leftists' popular support. The Japanese press and public, which have often criticized the government's control measures in the past, generally approved of the way Monday night's riots were handled.

7. Western Europe

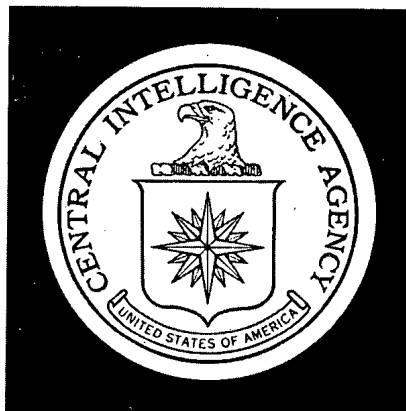
A four-nation consortium which is trying to develop an all-European combat aircraft is having its troubles. The four--Britain, West Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands--are currently hung up on basic performance specifications; they have managed to agree that the plane should have a swing-wing but are arguing over almost everything else. Once these disputes are ironed out, the haggling will begin again over assignment of design responsibilities for the plane's various components.

8. Bolivia

Barrientos says Cuban guerrillas are active again in Bolivia. He told Ambassador Castro his troops are not equipped to meet the challenge. Moreover, he said, his inability to keep the Army paid and supplied is causing a rift between himself and the military.

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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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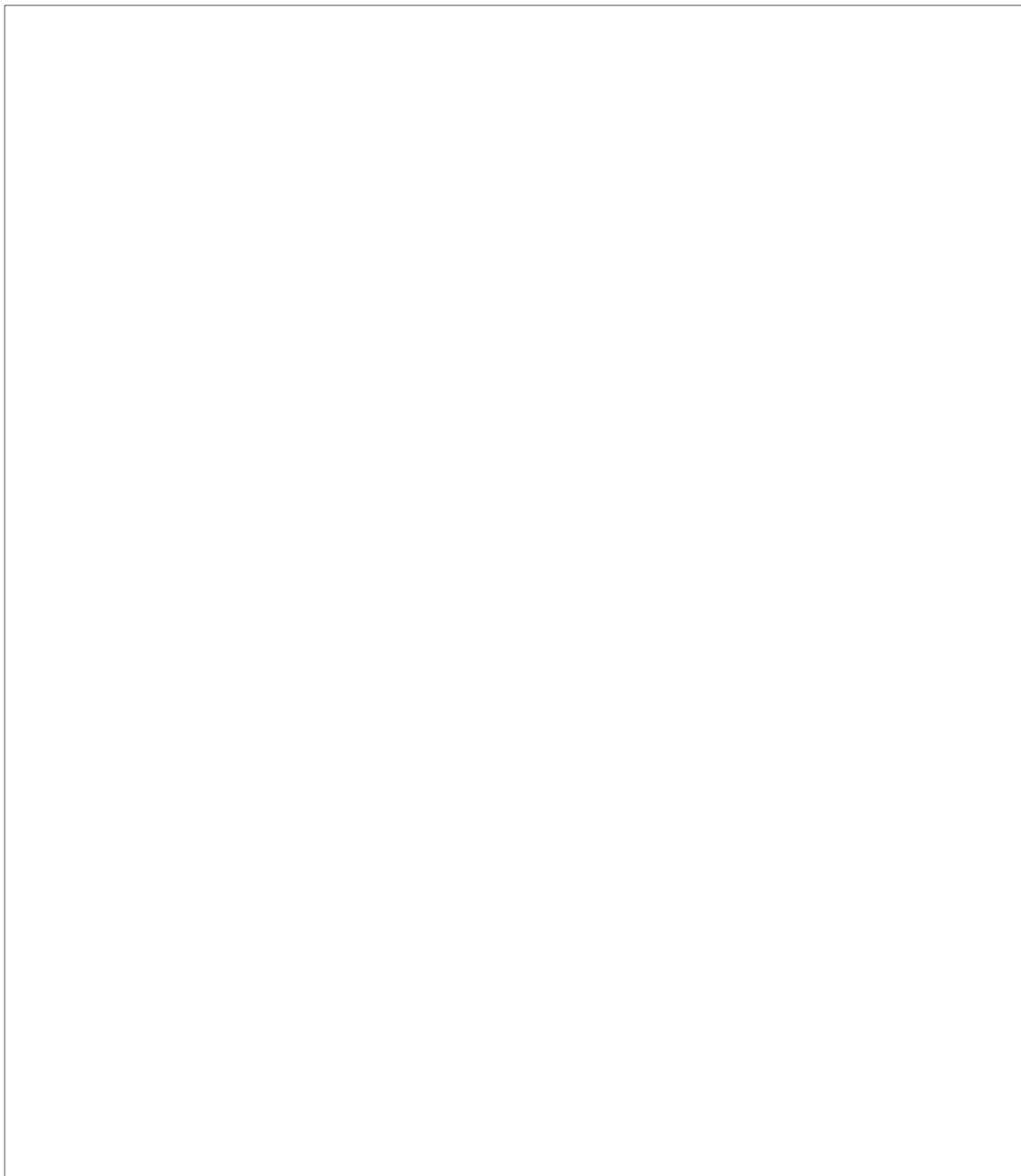
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23 October 1968

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

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION



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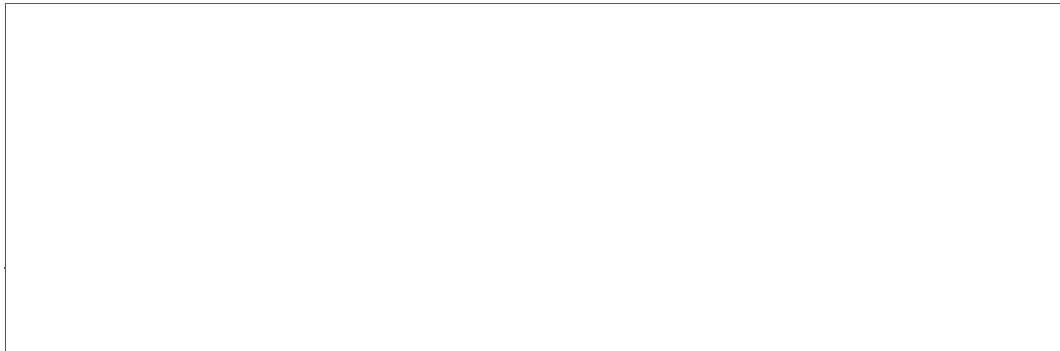
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Logistics: A message intercepted on 26 September indicates that the North Vietnamese are shipping about 10,000 rounds of 76-millimeter ammunition to South Vietnam--two to three times more than has been noted in any previous month.



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London Demonstration: The antiwar march scheduled for this coming Sunday is causing some uneasiness in both government and public quarters. The number and mood of the marchers are subject to a wide range of estimates. Police are guessing at about 25,000, while press speculation puts the figure at 100,000. The march, organized by a mixed bag of leftists, is supposed to wend its way peacefully to Hyde Park, but some of the radicals are planning to split off and head for the US Embassy. American firms also have been threatened.

The embassy is in close contact with police and believes they will be able to control the march.

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Front Commentary: Hanoi yesterday broadcast, on its international service in English, one of the Front's toughest statements in some time. The broadcast did not refer to current press speculation on

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new diplomatic initiatives, but it did restate all the old terms on negotiations. The commentary said the bombing must be stopped unconditionally, immediately, and without reciprocity.

Front propaganda is often more rabid than Hanoi's.

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On Released Sailors: Hanoi ungraciously acknowledged the return of the 14 North Vietnamese sailors in a domestic broadcast yesterday. The Communists used the occasion to chastise the US for the "illegal seizure of North Vietnamese citizens" and said that all such citizens held by the US should be returned immediately and without any special agreement between the two sides.

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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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