



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 29 October 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
29 OCTOBER 1968

1. Israel-Arabs

The comparatively heavy weekend casualties along the Suez Canal have been a shock to the Israeli public, and many are saying "this puts an end to all the talk of peace." The government will have to take this mood into account. It may well conclude that Sunday's retaliatory shelling of the Suez refinery, which damaged at most four storage tanks, was not a sufficiently vivid example of the eye-for-an-eye principle to discourage the Egyptians. The Israelis are probably also worried that the relative effectiveness of the Egyptian shelling on Saturday means that Soviet advisers have finally drummed some military techniques into Egyptian gunners.

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The Jordanian and Egyptian foreign ministers have threatened to leave New York for home unless Eban shows a little give in his negotiating position. This threat is primarily a means of applying still more pressure on Jarring to induce new concessions from Eban, but the two Arabs are perfectly capable of carrying it out.

Eban, who was due in New York on Sunday, has been delayed in Israel

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2. Czechoslovakia

Defying a ban on public demonstrations, several thousand students and young workers filtered through police barriers yesterday to march on Hradcany Castle and protest the Soviet occupation. Others demonstrated in downtown Prague. Soviet reactions were restrained; no troops were seen in the area, although Soviet Army staff cars monitored the demonstrations.

In a further effort to project an image of political normality, the Soviet press gave the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Czech republic--the occasion for the demonstrations--standard, fairly low-key treatment.

3. South Asia - Soviet Union - Communist China

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4. Peru

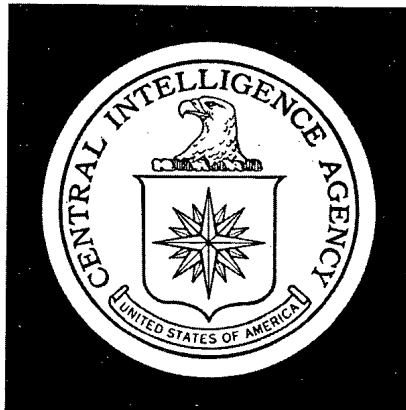
Service rivalries have led to the first open break in the unity of the revolutionary government. The minister of aviation--an original member of the three-member junta--has departed in a huff over air force promotion policies.

President Velasco still has personal control over the government, but continuing bickering among the military seems likely to prove a major headache for him.

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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

29 October 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

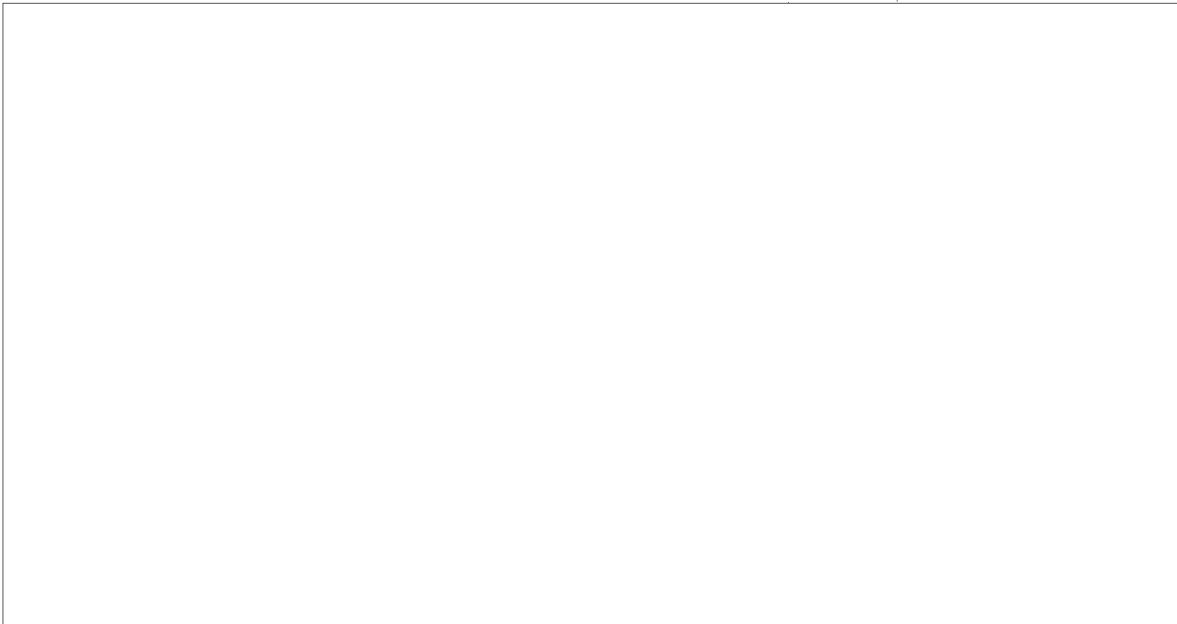
Hanoi Scuttlebutt: [redacted]

[redacted] diplomatic circles in the North Vietnamese capital are full of rumors about Sino-Vietnamese frictions. [redacted]

[redacted] the Chinese have put up signs along the border area which promise not to abandon the Vietnamese to the "revisionists." [redacted] Chinese are now being seen more frequently in downtown Hanoi and that some of them are wearing Mao buttons.

One rumor claims that Chinese laborers in North Vietnam are being withdrawn only to be replaced by Chinese combat troops. Another says that Ho Chi Minh himself has gone to Peking to discuss the Paris peace talks. There is no confirmation of any of this reporting and the last two suggestions seem most unlikely. The report is a good illustration, however, of the extent to which the Soviets are fanning the fires.

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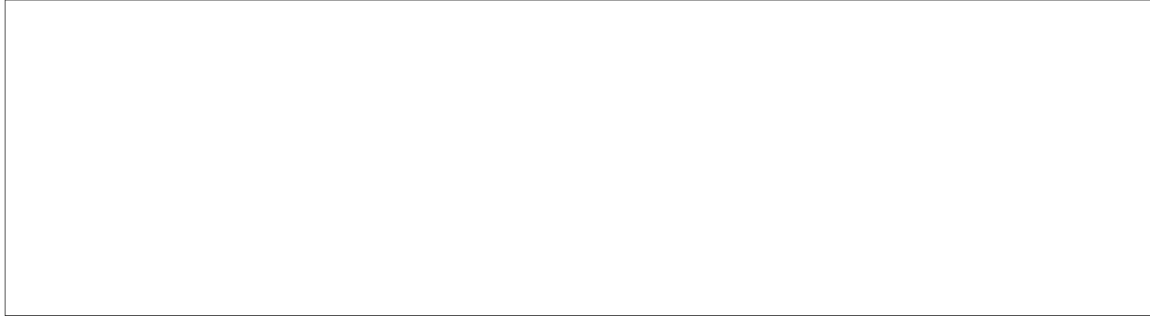
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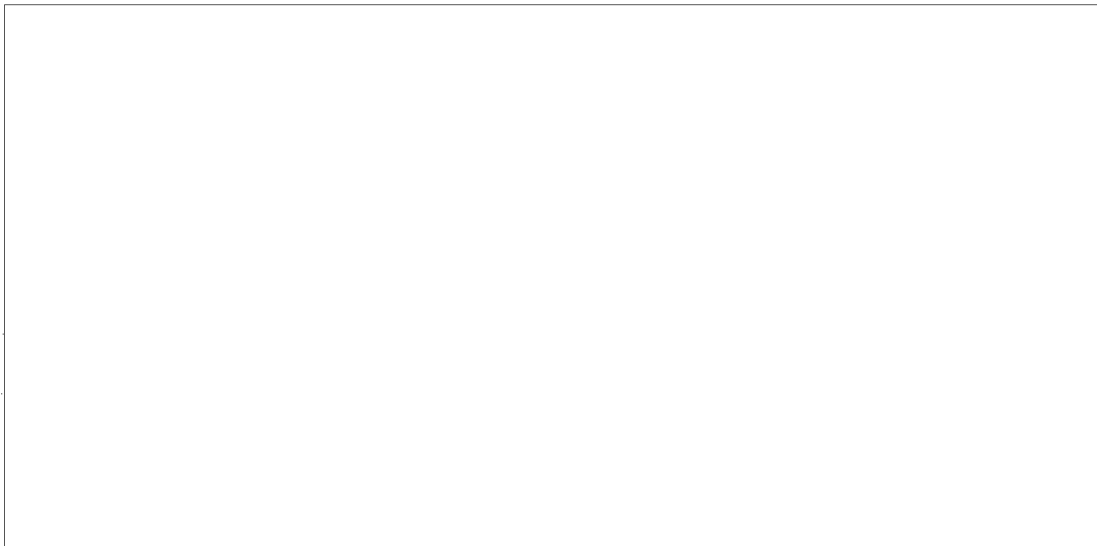


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Front Office in Stockholm: The Swedish Committee on Vietnam has announced that the Liberation Front opened an information office in Stockholm yesterday, its second in the West. A similar office was opened in Paris earlier this month.

The Communists have indicated the importance they attach to the Stockholm office by sending one of their more experienced overseas representatives to head it.

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Le Phuong, formerly in charge of the Front's relations with the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization and a frequent delegate to leftist international front meetings, is the number one man.

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Delegation Turned Down: The Dutch have rejected visa requests by a combined North Vietnamese - Liberation Front delegation which had hoped to visit the Netherlands.

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Doumer Bridge: [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] The Doumer bridge has been open to rail and vehicle traffic since late June, after heavy damage from December bombings was repaired. However, [REDACTED] sources in Hanoi reported that through late September the bridge showed a noticeable sway and pronounced vibration under heavy traffic.

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The piers supporting the bridge were only temporarily repaired last June to expedite traffic. The rising waters of the Red River during the heavy rains of September may have strained the piers. There has been no indication that traffic has been diverted from the bridge. There are, however, some 19 rail and highway by-passes across the Red River.

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

Bryn Mawr Petition: Hanoi Radio on 28 October publicized a petition by Bryn Mawr College students calling for a halt to the bombing. Over its international service, the radio claimed that the petition was published in the New York Times and signed by 1,000 "former" Bryn Mawr students. The broadcast also publicized the desertion of ten more US soldiers to Sweden.

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