



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 31 October 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
31 OCTOBER 1968

1. Israel-Egypt

Eban is now expected in New York on Saturday, but we still do not believe he will be bringing any significant new proposals with him.

UN officials, meanwhile, say they think the Israelis are preparing for "a real go" in the southern Suez Canal area. The Israelis deny they intend to start anything, but they make it clear they are ready for a major retaliation against any further Egyptian "provocation."

2. Warsaw Pact

Defense ministers from all the Warsaw Pact states, including Czechoslovakia and Rumania, met in Moscow on Tuesday and Wednesday. We do not know what they discussed, but their press release says they achieved an "identity of views." Whatever the substance of the talks, the Soviets doubtless regard this show of unity as a political plus.

We do not at the moment have any good sign of a link between the military caucus and a meeting of the Soviet party Central Committee which was also in progress in Moscow yesterday. The party people were said to be talking mainly about Soviet agricultural policy and, while this may be true, there was bound to be discussion of the Czechoslovak problem as well.

3. Soviet Union

The helicopter carrier Moskva is scheduled to return to the Black Sea from the Mediterranean by 6 November. This is part of a general rotation which will bring the size of the Soviet Mediterranean fleet back down to the level of recent months.

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4. Mexico

Looking back on the recent student unrest, our embassy in Mexico City makes the following observations:

--Essentially, the Mexican social and political structure withstood the student onslaught very well. The government will, however, have trouble bringing the next generation back into the fold with its traditional--and heretofore highly successful--blend of control and flexibility.

--The government may now ride closer herd on the intellectuals, and particularly on the leftists who have long used the universities as sanctuaries. On the other hand, the disturbances may also produce some needed reforms in the universities.

--The political center of gravity has shifted to the right in the wake of the unrest. The governing party's basic structure remains intact, however, and we may soon see some counterbalancing move to placate the Mexican establishment's left wing.

5. Colombia

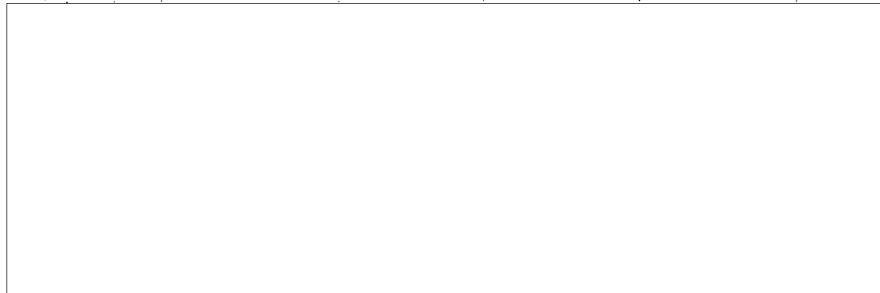
Students and police fought it out around the university in Bogota yesterday. Police arrested 23, and 27 policemen were wounded. Rumor has it that the students plan more trouble in Bogota, and disturbances may break out in other cities as well.

The Ford Foundation was one of the prime targets of yesterday's demonstrators, and any further unrest could also have a heavy anti-American flavor.

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6. Peru



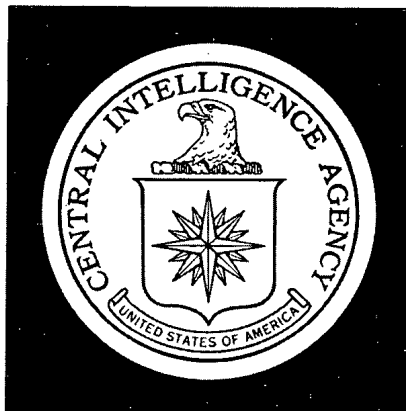
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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 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

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Observations on Life in Hanoi: A recent Western traveler to Hanoi reports more signs of friction between the Chinese and Soviets in the city. He claims that in mid-October the Chinese set up a roadblock near the Doumer bridge, in an apparent effort to block the Soviets' access to Gia Lam airport. North Vietnamese guards came along, however, and had a fist fight with the Chinese. Later in the day the roadblock was gone. A few days later roadblocks appeared at the entrance and exit to the street where the Soviet Embassy is located. The source also said that the Czech press

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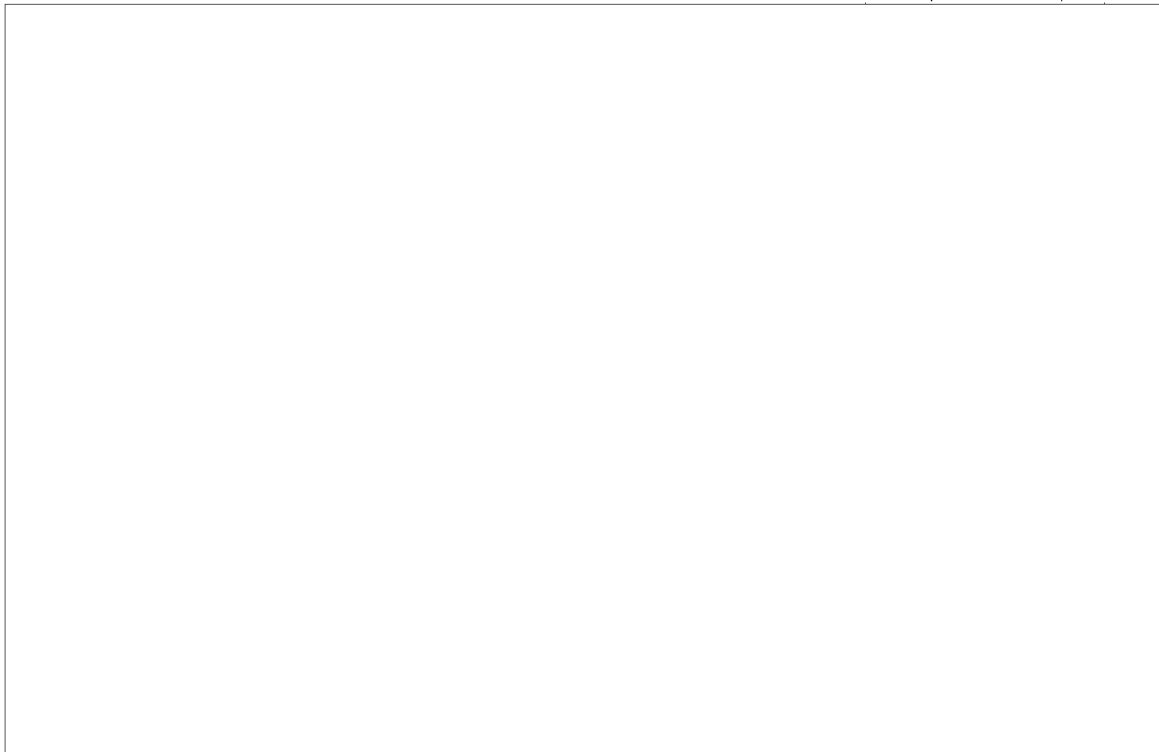
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secretary was recently reprimanded by the foreign ministry for filing stories about Soviet-Chinese encounters, and the North Vietnamese - Chinese fracas at the bridge.

By way of miscellaneous information, the source said that the local militia are still being trained in street fighting although not very effectively. The bulk of the rail traffic moves at night, although the rail yards seem to operate normally both day and night. Some yards that were bombed out are said to have been back in operation for several months.

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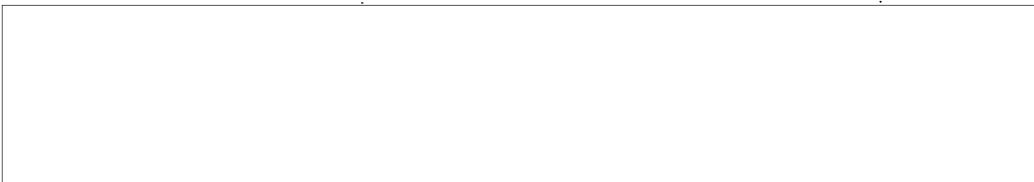
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Japanese Film to Show US Prisoners: The Japanese Communist Party is sponsoring production of a film documentary on North Vietnam, to include interviews with US prisoners of war [redacted]

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[redacted] The project, reportedly authorized by Hanoi in late October, is to be directed by a leftist Japanese film director who has left for Hanoi. He plans to remain in North Vietnam for about four months, according to the source.

The documentary may include footage from Communist-controlled regions of South Vietnam. [redacted]

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Tightened Rice Ration in Hanoi: [redacted]

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[redacted] as of mid-September the rice ration consisted of 40 percent rice and 60 percent wheat, as compared to a 50-50 mixture earlier in the year. There have been other isolated reports to this effect, but there is no firm indication that this change in proportion is widespread.

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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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