

The President's Daily Brief

19 May 1972

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

19 May 1972

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

[redacted] Soviet [redacted]
Vietnam [redacted] Page 1.

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Military action has remained relatively light throughout most of South Vietnam, but increased enemy action in the Mekong Delta appears likely. (Page 2)

China's People's Daily has carried the complete text of President Nixon's address of 8 May. (Page 3)

[redacted]
[redacted] North Vietnam.
(Page 4)

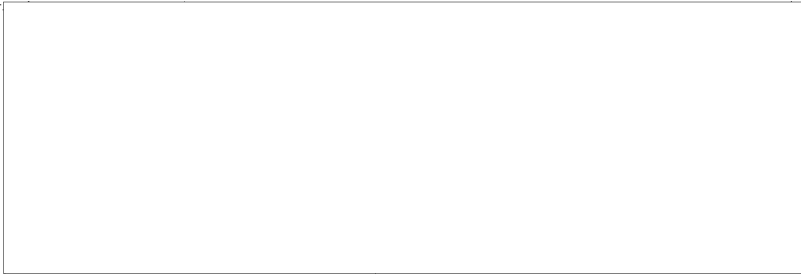
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[redacted] Chile [redacted]
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USSR-VIETNAM



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SOUTH VIETNAM

Military action remains relatively light throughout most of South Vietnam. Two skirmishes were reported yesterday near Kontum City, and a government relief force is continuing to make further progress toward An Loc.

Government forces continue to counterattack north and west of Hue

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Fighting has increased in the southern Mekong Delta, where North Vietnamese troops have attacked and partially overrun a district capital in Kien Giang Province that is astride the infiltration route from Cambodia.

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During the past month four South Vietnamese regiments have moved from the delta to the relief of An Loc. This leaves two government divisions in the delta and significantly shifts the balance of opposing forces in the Communists' favor.

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The South Vietnamese still seem to have the upper hand in the most heavily populated regions of the Mekong Delta, but there are signs that the North Vietnamese intend to concentrate their main force units to take advantage of the weakened South Vietnamese position. Hanoi is now able to assemble the most powerful striking force of regular troops it has ever had in this region. Even though this force is weak in artillery, and apparently lacks armor, it is still capable of opening yet another major battlefield.

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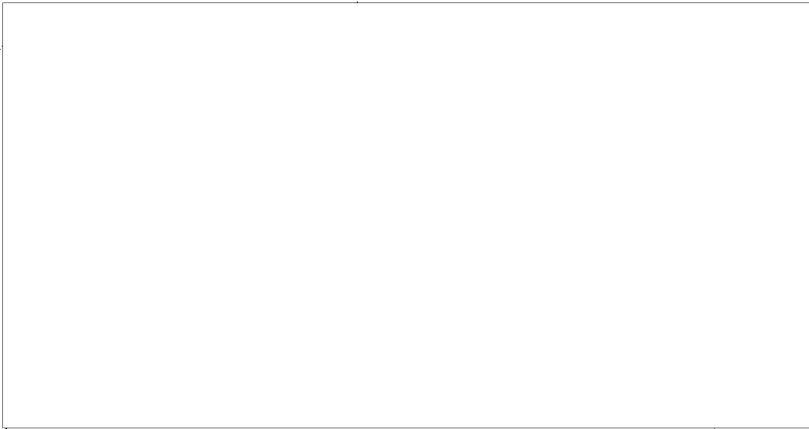
CHINA-US-VIETNAM

The People's Daily of 11 May, which was just received in Hong Kong, carried the complete text of President Nixon's address on 8 May. This issue had featured Peking's first authoritative comment on the speech; a note at the end of the official comment directed the readers' attention to the text. The comment had been broadcast by the Chinese, but the speech was not.

It is not unprecedented for Chinese media to carry the text of foreign statements that are then subjected to criticism, but in the case of the speech on 8 May the Chinese have confined their attacks to the military measures announced and have not commented on the cease-fire and withdrawal proposals. People's Daily, in effect, leaves the latter before the reader without rebuttal. Hanoi will not be pleased that the article also let stand without comment the President's statement that the actions he announced were not directed against any other nation.

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NORTH VIETNAM



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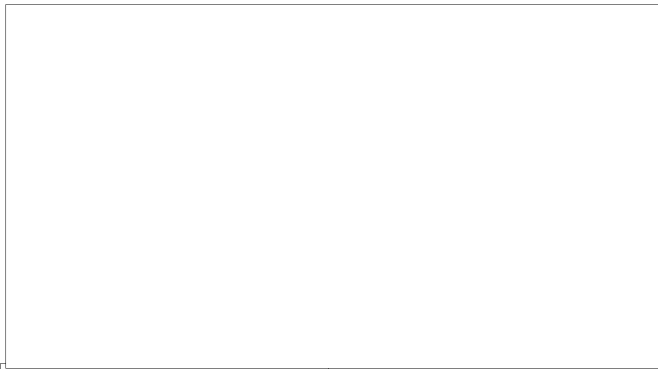
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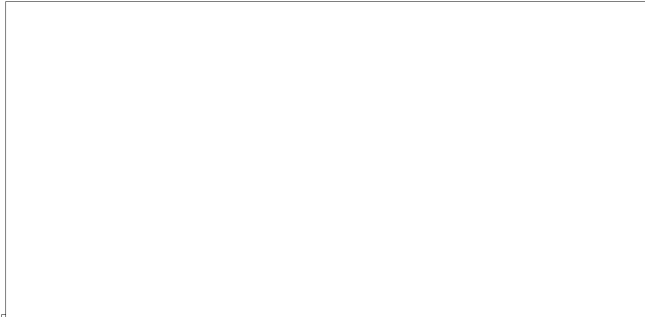
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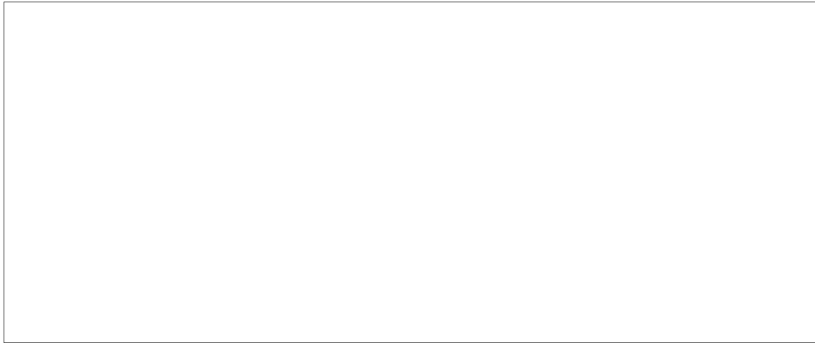
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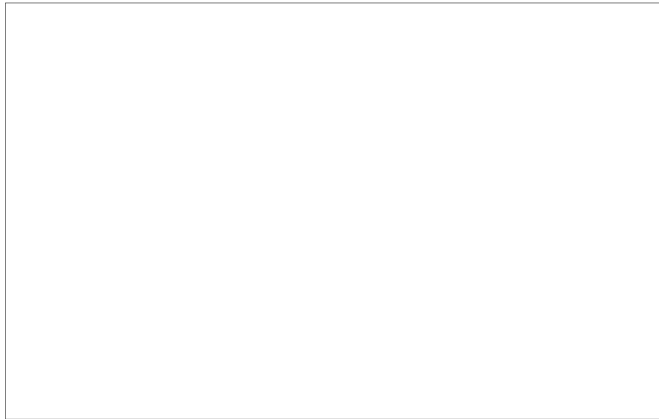
CHILE



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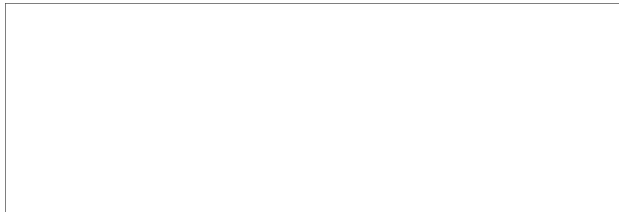
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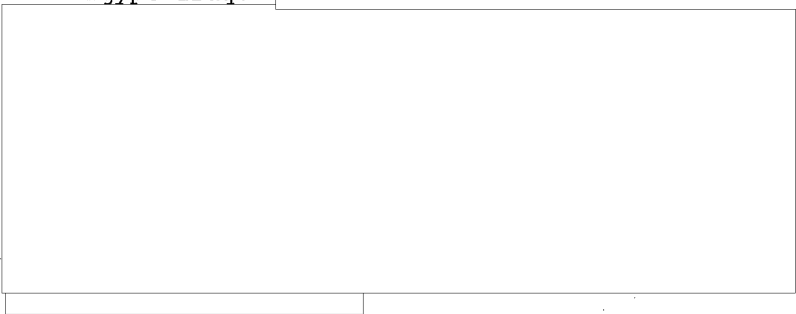
NOTES

West Germany: With opposition leader Barzel calling for an end to procrastination, Christian Democratic state leaders decided yesterday not to delay the vote on the Eastern treaties until 25 or 26 May. Ratification of the treaties is expected today when the opposition Christian Democrats, despite their 21-20 edge, should allow the treaties to pass in the Bundesrat by the abstention of one or more state governments.

USSR-Cuba: The F-class submarine that has been at Mariel departed early this week, marking the first time in some ten weeks that no Soviet warships have been in Cuba. The diesel attack submarine was east of Cape Kennedy on 18 May, apparently headed home. The Soviet destroyer, submarine tender, and tanker that left Cuba ahead of the submarine have maintained a northeasterly heading since entering the Atlantic early this month.

Egypt-Iraq: 

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France: According to the atomic affairs officer of the French Foreign Ministry, the 1972 nuclear test series is to run from late June to the end of July at the Pacific test center east of Tahiti. The officer said the tests are to be low-yield detonations of 20 kilotons or less, in contrast to earlier reports that at least one test this year would be a high-yield thermonuclear explosion.

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