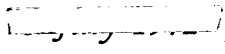




The President's Daily Brief



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Sunday Cable - 2 July 72

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Exempt from general
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exemption category 5B(1),(2),(3)
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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

2 July 1972

VIETNAM

Heavy rains evidently are hampering the government's campaign in Quang Tri Province. South Vietnamese paratroopers are bogged down some seven miles south of the provincial capital although they have encountered only minor enemy opposition. East of Quang Tri City, South Vietnamese Marines and territorial forces consolidating their positions are also meeting little resistance.

Intercepts indicate, however, that the Communists may be preparing to counterattack in several areas. Early today Hue was shelled for the first time in this year's enemy offensive. North of the city, a regiment of the North Vietnamese 304th Division was ordered yesterday to mount an attack on positions east of Route 1. Several North Vietnamese units have moved into the foothills west of the road, where they could hit South Vietnamese supply and rear guard elements. Communist artillery units have also been ordered to keep firing on the Camp Evans area, the focal point for logistics and artillery support of the Quang Tri operation.

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USSR

The TASS account of President Nixon's press conference carried by the Soviet press yesterday reported the following aspects of his statements on Vietnam: that the US has informed Hanoi that it will return to the Paris talks on 13 July; that the US is prepared to conduct talks without any conditions; that it would not have returned to Paris unless it considered there was a chance to begin serious and constructive proposals; that the US will take constructive positions and be prepared to meet the other side half-way; that reports of US attacks on North Vietnamese dams and dikes are not accurate; that the US has ordered that dams not be bombed in view of the very serious consequences for the civilian population; and that this order will remain in force in the future.

TASS used editing and commentary to call into question certain of the President's statements. It described the President's conditions for ending the bombing as contrary to his assurances that the US is not setting any preconditions. It also observed that the President again left the Viet Cong proposals unanswered, and characterized US bombing and mining operations as "aggressive acts" condemned by the world. In addition, it reported the lengthy question noting the high level of US military activities in Indochina and asking whether

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the President could end the war by next January, in accordance with his campaign promises. In adjacent columns, Pravda carried reports of the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong reactions in Paris

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TASS' handling of the Vietnam aspects of the press conference is in keeping with a recent increase in the volume of Soviet propaganda support for Hanoi which has also entailed a slightly more critical attitude toward the US. Soviet commentaries have resumed the use of pejorative language reminiscent of various pre-summit periods of heightened invective. Aside from an escalation in language, however, these commentaries do not indicate any shift in the fundamental Soviet position supporting a negotiated settlement on Hanoi's terms. They suggest, rather, Soviet defensiveness concerning the USSR's public record of support for North Vietnam.

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