



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 29 March 1968



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President's Daily Brief
29 March 1968

LATE ITEM

Israel

Four Israelis were killed this morning by a terrorist mine on a farm inside Israeli territory south of Lake Tiberias. A US citizen--a recently arrived volunteer worker--was seriously injured. A Foreign Ministry official in Tel Aviv told Ambassador Barbour shortly thereafter that Israel "must take action." Although the official did not speak specifically of military action, the ambassador notes the obvious danger that the Israelis will mount another reprisal. This is true even though they acknowledge that past reprisals have not stopped the terrorists.

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DAILY BRIEF
29 MARCH 1968

1. Vietnam

Signs are accumulating in intercepts [REDACTED] that a new Communist offensive may be imminent. In the past few days there have been six references in Communist traffic to "N-Day," the Communist equivalent of D-Day. Dates between 28 March and 2 April have been mentioned. The last multiple references to "N-Day" came just before the Tet offensive. 3.3(h)(2)

We believe the heaviest attacks could come in the central highlands, coordinated perhaps with assaults against urban areas and/or against military installations in the north. An offensive in the area northeast of Saigon is also possible. Our information suggests that mortar, rocket, and artillery attacks will be featured, although ground attacks into towns cannot be ruled out.

2. Panama

The pro-Arias National Union yesterday got out its biggest crowd so far, and the result was the most serious clash yet with the National Guard. The demonstration--a peaceful protest march by pro-Arias women--drew 15,000 people. As the crowd was dispersing, hoodlums and pro-Arias activists went into action, burning cars, looting stores, and attacking Guardsmen. Two people reportedly were killed before the Guard got things back under control.

There may be more violence in the three days before the Supreme Court meets on the impeachment crisis. The Guard can probably keep the lid on, however--although at the cost of increasing popular resentment.

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3. Czechoslovakia

Dubcek yesterday made his strongest affirmation yet of Czechoslovak sovereignty. His assertion that "responsibility for our internal developments... rests primarily with...this Communist Party" was a reply to heavy-handed East German criticism, as well as to the more tactfully expressed concern of other Soviet bloc parties.

Dubcek made his remarks at a Central Committee meeting which saw the elevation of liberals to two key party posts and the resignation of Novotny from the party's presidium and secretariat. Ludvik Svoboda, a military hero known for his advocacy of strong ties with Moscow, was named state president, but he is almost certain to be merely a figurehead.

4. Poland

Although the government forestalled an open student demonstration in Warsaw yesterday, student militants are still demanding redress of their grievances, including reinstatement of dismissed faculty members. They have been warned that the government would equate further disturbances with antistate activity, but there are rumors that another student rally is planned for next week.

5. Guatemala

President Mendez has moved to replace the commander of the powerful army unit in Zacapa and the commander of the honor guard in Guatemala City. He has also fired his defense minister and persuaded the legislature to censure his vice president, and the commander of the national police reportedly has also been replaced. Some of these men seem to have been involved in anti-Mendez plotting and may have been privy to the kidnaping of the Catholic archbishop two weeks ago.

Mendez is taking his political life in his hands in moving against the country's traditional arbiters of power, but he seems to be getting away with it so far.

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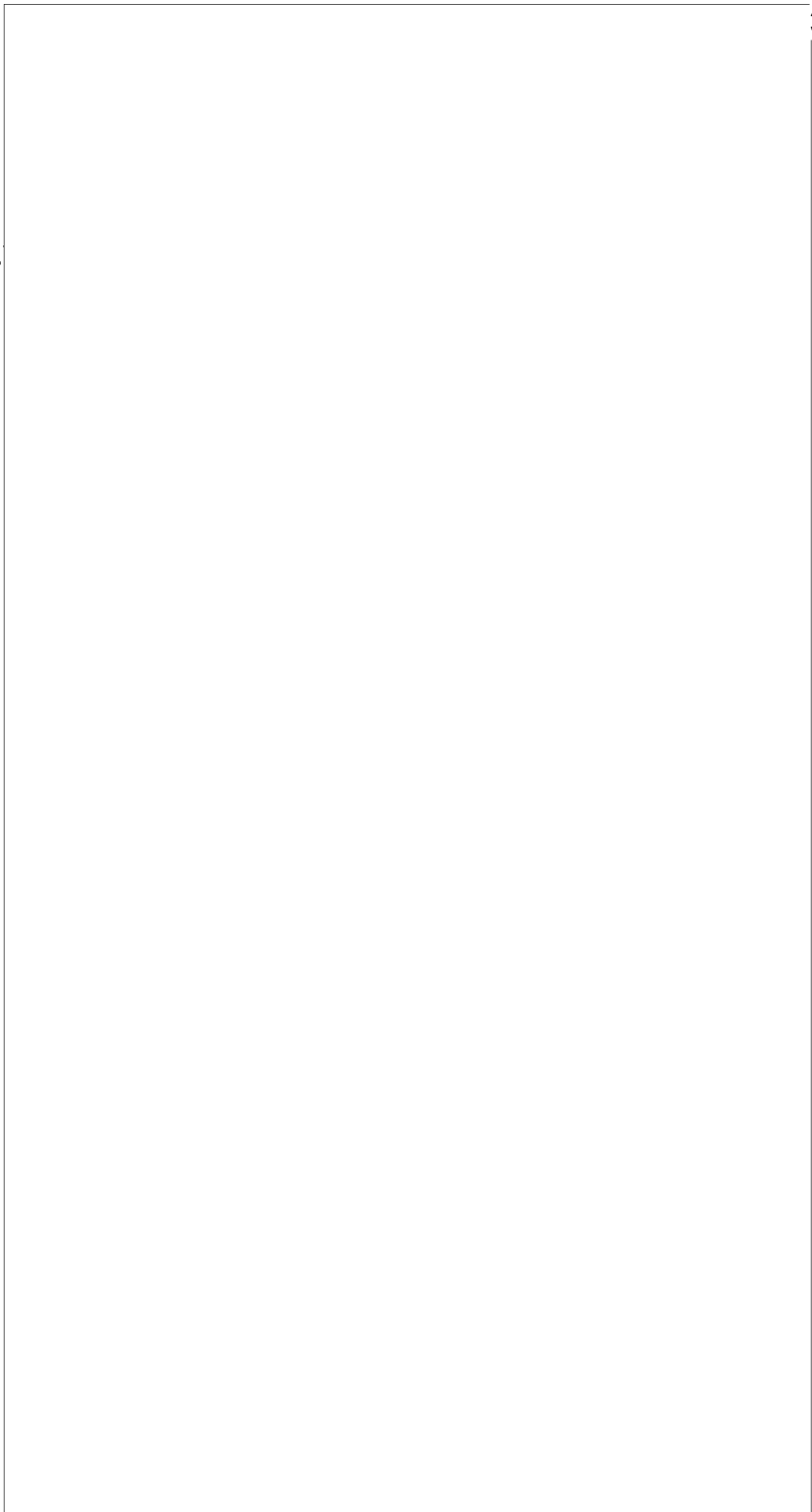
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6. Soviet Union

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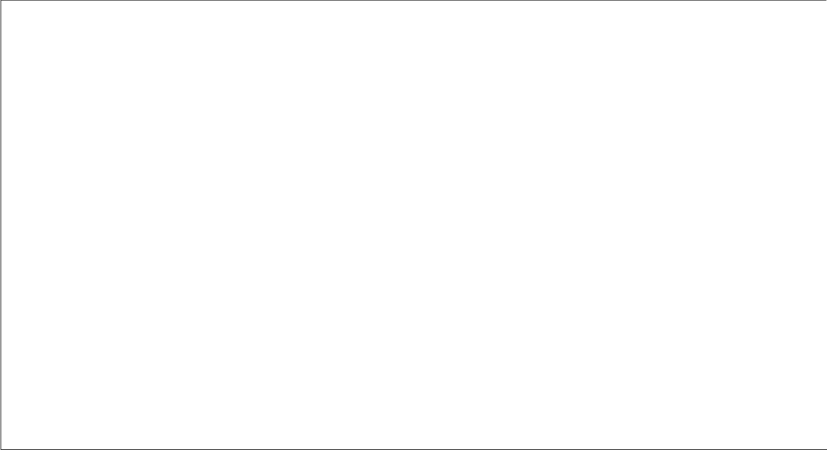


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7. Jordan

Fatah terrorists have come out of the shadows and are now operating openly in Jordan. They apparently control much of the Jordan Valley, where Amman's authority has almost evaporated. In Amman itself, the terrorists--or hoodlums posing as terrorists--now carry arms and aggressively solicit funds for "Palestine." Taking advantage of an unprecedentedly high level of anti-American popular sentiment, these elements have begun applying their coercive collection techniques to US citizens.



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8. New Zealand



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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of US Political Attitudes



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29 March 1968

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

29 March 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

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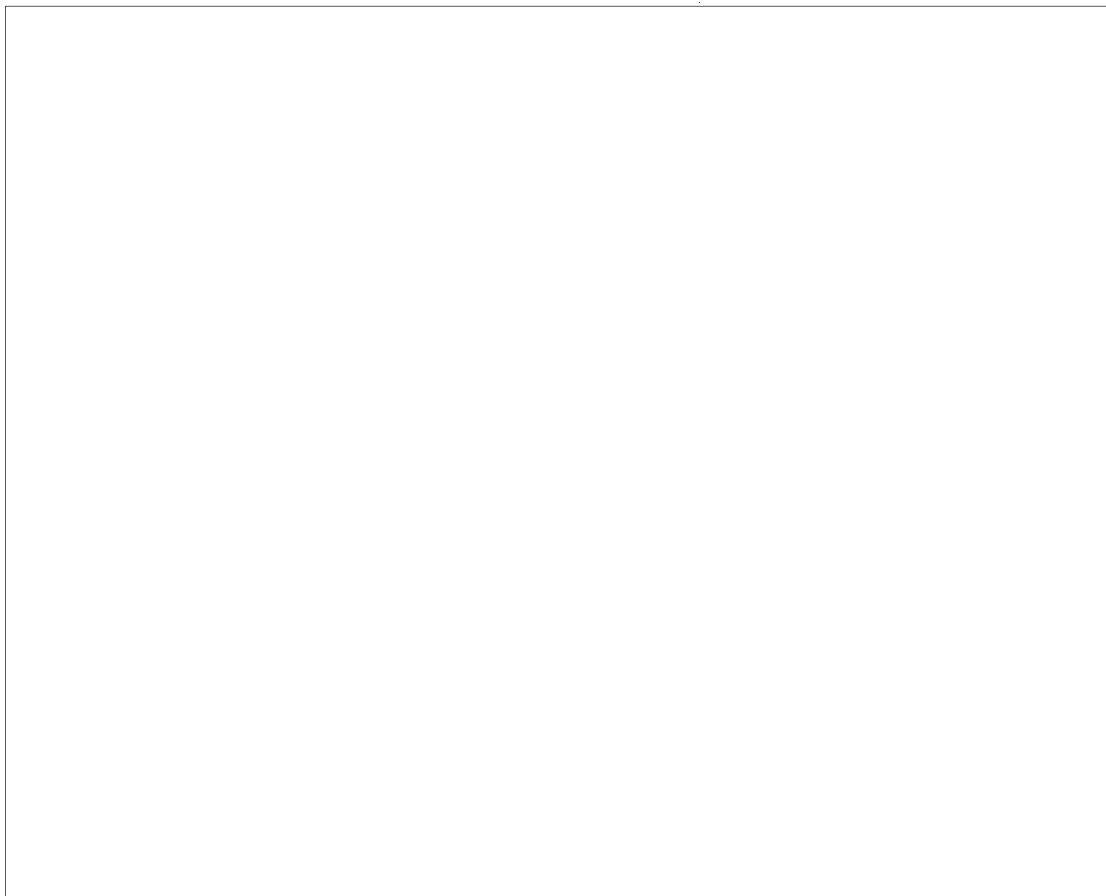
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More on Front Interviews: The Japanese correspondent who interviewed Liberation Front representative Nguyen Van Tien in Hanoi on 25 March continues to publish copy on the interview. In the 27 March issue of Asahi, Tien is quoted at greater length on the accomplishments of the Tet offensive.

He claims that the Communists still have local troops and guerrilla forces inside the city of Hue and that the Communist-sponsored Revolutionary Administrative Committee is still functioning. Tien alleged that Hue was virtually under a state of siege, surrounded by Communist troops who were poised to strike at "any time."

He also claimed that the Tet offensive had enabled the Liberation Army to "double its strength."

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Hanoi's Deputy Foreign Minister Off to Africa:
 North Vietnam has opened up its drive for recognition in African countries by sending Vice Foreign Minister Hoang Van Loi and a group of Foreign Ministry officials to Algiers. The Algerian Government informed Western news agencies on 27 March that the arrival of the North Vietnamese delegation was expected on 3 April as the first step on its tour. Hanoi seems to be after diplomatic recognition in Africa, as well as political support for its position on the war and negotiations--the same objectives it is seeking throughout western Europe.

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

Hanoi Quotes US Press: Although Hanoi's coverage of the US political scene has picked up somewhat in the last two weeks, yesterday's domestic broadcast quoting the North Vietnamese Army newspaper was an unusually direct and independent commentary linking the war to the elections. More typical treatment is found in an item on Hanoi radio's international service on 28 March which leaned entirely on quotes from the US press.

The item played up colorful sentences from US news media on the war, which the broadcast described as an "undeniable stalemate." The New York Times and Newsweek were singled out as "demanding an end to the present US strategy in Vietnam." Hanoi quoted the Times at length on the transfer of General Westmoreland and on the results of the Communist Tet offensive. It stressed the alleged frustration the offensive produced in Washington, the economic impact of the war, and widespread popular opposition to administration policies in Vietnam.

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Hanoi Cites Antiwar Petition: Hanoi radio's international service yesterday cited "reports from Washington" that "more than 1,500 American public

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servants have signed a petition to US President Johnson demanding an end to the US dirty war in Vietnam." Among other things, the broadcast also noted the Illinois attorney general's recent expression of "anxiety over the aggressive policy pursued by Johnson and company," a speech by Mayor Lindsay opposing "foolish escalation," and John Kenneth Galbraith's recent address in which, according to Hanoi, he "demanded a cessation of the US war in Vietnam."

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Hanoi Broadcasts US Serviceman's "Appeal":
Hanoi's English language broadcast to American servicemen in South Vietnam on 27 March carried an "appeal" by one "McKinley Nolan," who was described as a US enlisted man who defected from the 1st Infantry Division. The American-accented voice claiming to be Nolan said he had been treated well and went on to give a standard Communist spiel on the war. The "appeal" closed with a suggestion that US troops ask to return to the US. Once home they were admonished not to interfere with the antiwar demonstrators "who are rising up to overthrow the American Government."

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