



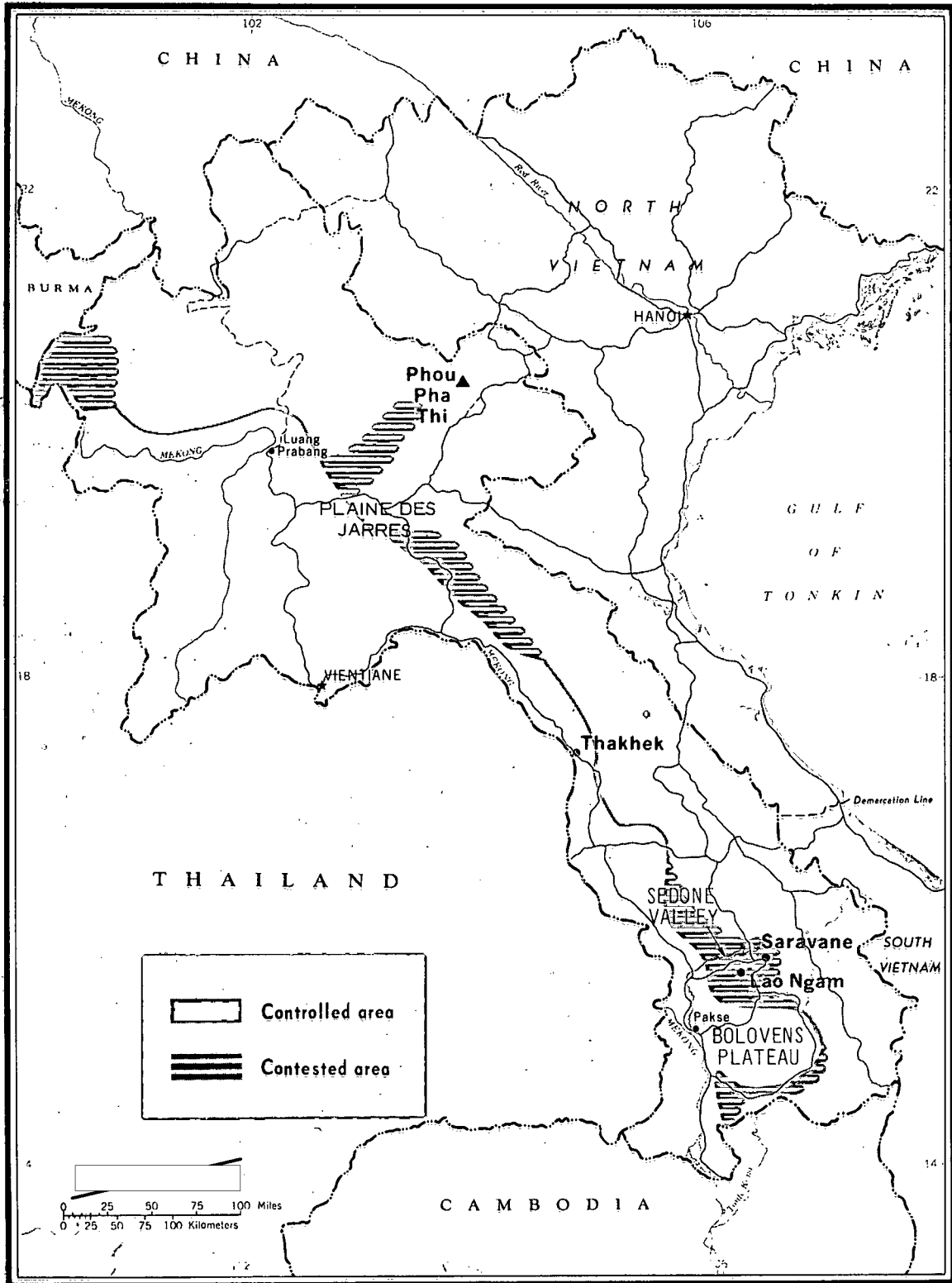
The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 12 March 1968



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DAILY BRIEF
12 MARCH 1968

1. South Vietnam

General Le Nguyen Khang, III Corps commander, believes that the government is deteriorating and that Thieu will be unable to do anything about it.

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[redacted] widespread dissatisfaction exists in the officer corps over the government's failure to take advantage of the opportunity to rally the people following the Tet offensive.

Khang believes followers of Ky will make a determined try to get Ky appointed prime minister. Khang denies rumors, however, that either he or Police Director Loan is planning any action against the government.

2. Laos

There are a number of signs pointing to a new round of Communist attacks in the southern part of the country. A significant enemy build-up in the Bolovens Plateau region is apparently under way, and there may be as many as four North Vietnamese regiments currently in the Saravane-Sedone valley area. The Communists are also stepping up pressure near Thakhek.

3. Cambodia

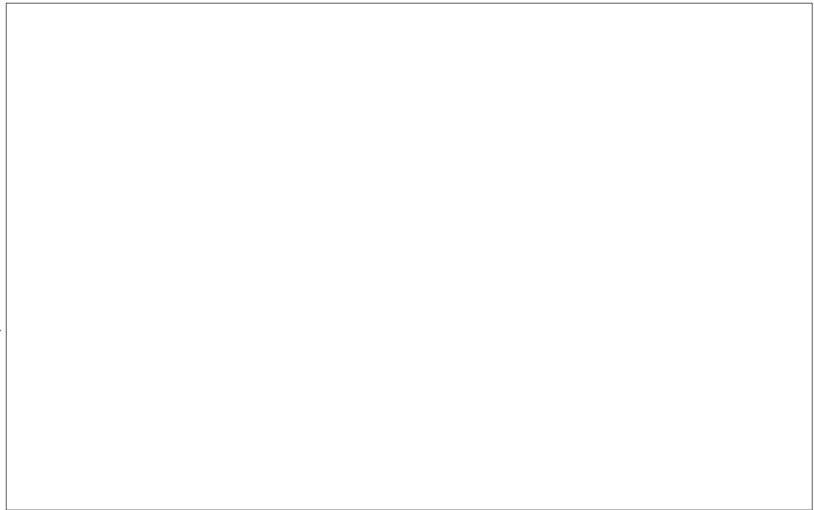
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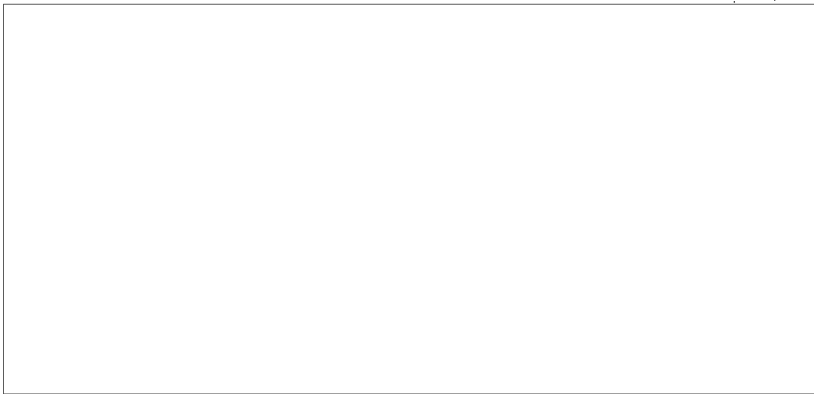
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4. Soviet Union

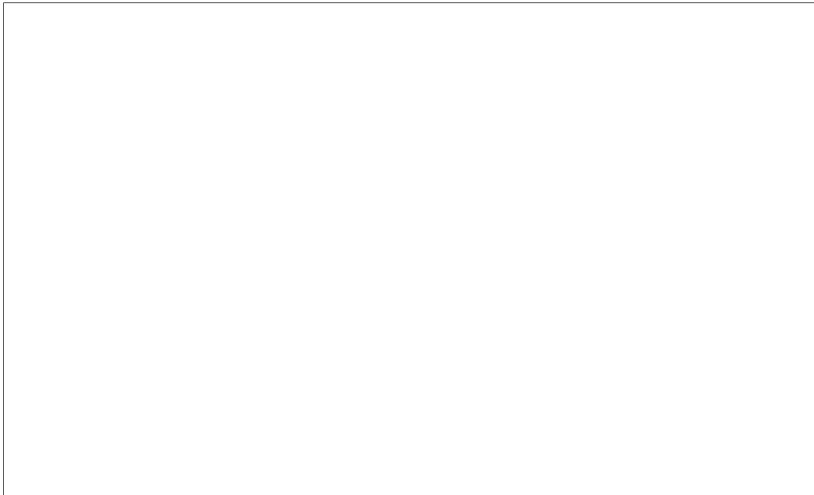


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5. Soviet Union



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6. Panama

The National Assembly ended a four-hour session last night without taking a vote to impeach Robles. After hearing the investigating commission's recommendations that the charges against the President be accepted, progovernment deputies asked to have all the documentary evidence read into the record--a tactic that may well tie things up for several days.

7. Okinawa

Local leftists protesting against B-52s at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, have also stirred up publicity about the special reconnaissance aircraft there.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] we anticipate more headlines and perhaps demonstrations against these planes. Contingency plans at Kadena are already in effect.

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8. Poland

Student rioting in Warsaw resumed yesterday and now there are signs that the unrest is spreading to other elements of the population. The party press, for instance, admits that more than half of those arrested are not students, but does not identify them. There are also rumors that workers in the capital are preparing to strike at the "opportune" moment to protest against police handling of the disturbances.

9. East -
West Germany

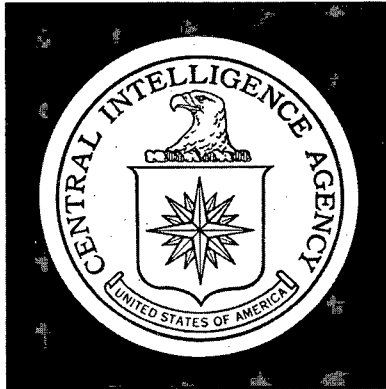
The East Germans have decreed that members of the neo - Nazi German Nationalist Democratic Party, or people "engaged in neo-Nazi activities," are banned from entering East Germany and transiting to West Berlin. In essence, this means the East Germans have devised another issue which they can use to interfere with traffic to Berlin. Allied access is not affected.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam



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16
12 March 1968

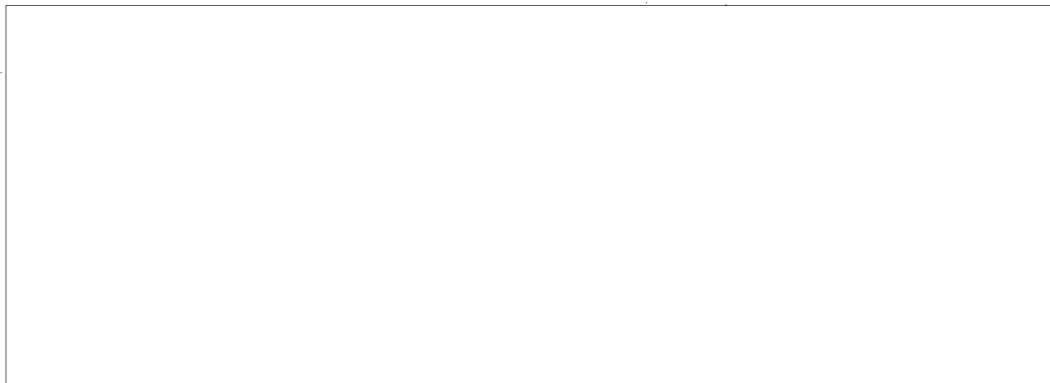
Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Hanoi Official Agrees to Discuss POW Issue: The chargé of the North Vietnamese Embassy in Vientiane has agreed to meet with US Embassy officials to discuss the prisoner of war issue. Efforts to contact the chargé on the same subject last year were rebuffed. In a conversation at a reception on 8 March, the deputy chief of the US mission informed the chargé of US plans to release three North Vietnamese sailors in reciprocity for Hanoi's release of three pilots. When the chargé was told of earlier US efforts to contact him, he invited the US official to meet with him to discuss the POW issue. When asked about his remark to Ambassador Sullivan last month implying that Hanoi might release additional US prisoners, the chargé replied that he personally believed that further releases could be expected in line with the "humanitarian" policy of the Liberation Front.

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Hanoi Plays Up Thieu-Ky Friction: Radio Hanoi, in a broadcast to South Vietnam on 10 March, zeroed in on political instability in Saigon in the wake of the Tet offensive and attempted to dramatize Western press reports of friction between Thieu and Ky. The

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commentary used recent changes in the South Vietnamese Army's command structure, the arrest of prominent civilian politicians, and the refusal of the National Assembly to grant Thieu emergency powers to illustrate its thesis that the Saigon government is about to collapse. All elements of this government are "quarreling like cats and dogs," according to the broadcast. Vice President Ky was described as "pouring everything into an effort to overthrow Thieu" and Thieu was reportedly trying to curb Ky's powers. All of these internal problems, concluded the broadcast, make the US position in South Vietnam increasingly difficult.

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Hanoi Sends Students Abroad: [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Hanoi is continuing to send large numbers of students abroad for technical training. The ministry informed the provinces that an estimate of the number of students for study abroad has been decided upon and that if the provinces were in agreement with the figures, student files should be sent to Hanoi during March. The number of students for foreign training included 400 from populous Nghe An Province, and 20 each from sparsely populated Lai Chau and Lao Cai provinces.

* * *

North Vietnam Shipping Report: Ship arrivals and import tonnages reached new highs in January. Ship traffic was so heavy that congestion slowed operations in Haiphong harbor. Imports of general cargoes set a new record, and petroleum and bulk food imports were near their previous highs. More than three quarters of all goods in January was brought in by Communist ships.

Imports in February were down appreciably, in part because of congestion at Haiphong. Imports of foodstuffs in particular dropped sharply.

North Vietnamese exports, meanwhile, have recently begun to rise. Coal accounts for most of the

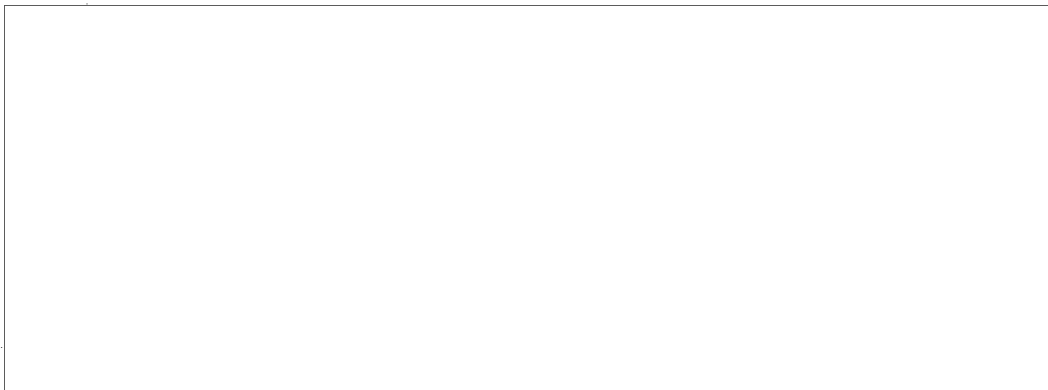
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increase, and this in turn reflects the repairs which have recently been made to the main hold-up in the coal pipeline--processing facilities at Cam Pha.

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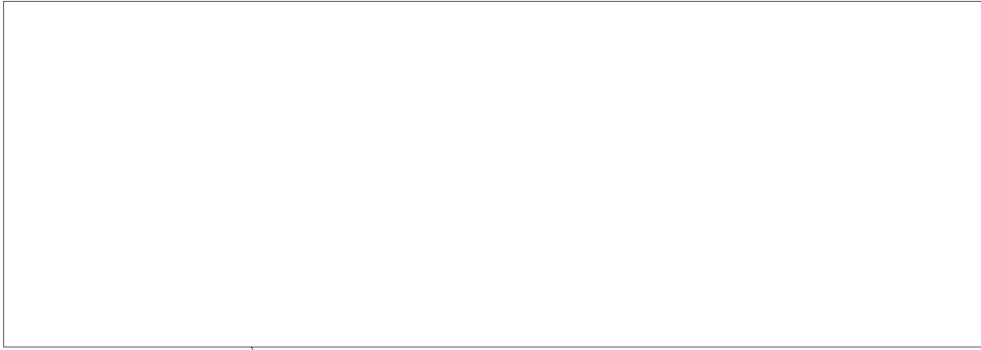


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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Hanoi Reports Antiwar Activity: In its 9 March English language broadcast, Hanoi radio continued its policy of reporting statements and meetings in the US protesting the war. It reported that 20 of the 30 members of the faculty of the University of Chicago Divinity School had signed a statement protesting the war and supporting those students who resisted being drafted into the armed forces. A teach-in held on 6 March at Southern Connecticut State College and addressed by Yale University chaplain William Coffin, Jr. was also reported. Coffin was described as one of the five American intellectuals being prosecuted for their antidraft roles. He was quoted as saying that "what is traitorous in this country is not to dissent but to remain blindly submissive." Finally, a press conference held in Washington on 6 March by Boston University professor Howard Zinn (who was involved in the release of the three US pilots) was recounted. Zinn compared the magnanimous release of the pilots to the "heinous act of the US authorities in prosecuting the five antiwar American intellectuals."



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